By the way, that's called a Tablature Diagram, and usually it displays numbers that indicate certain frets on certain strings that you're supposed to play. We'll use it for that later on, but here it's just a way to show Downstrokes and Upstrokes through the passage of time. The passage of time is shown by the "1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +" below each measure, or bar, of music. Each measure has 4 strong beats (the numbers) alternating with 4 weak beats (the plusses). It's called 4/4 Time, to be counted: One-and-Two-and-Three-and-Four-and.

So the 1st pattern has 4 strong Downstrokes. Play 4 or 5 measures of this pattern, and wake me when you're through.....Yeah, pretty dull stuff, but you know, sometimes that's the very pattern that works best. Try the 2nd pattern, with the lighter Upstrokes interspersed among the heavier Downstrokes. Juicier, but even that, after a while, begins to sound kinda redundant. And redundant. Specifically, the problem is: If you play several measures in a row, it gets harder for your ear to identify the first beat (also known as Count 1) of succeeding measures. All the Down-Ups quickly start bleeding together.

The 3rd pattern on the previous page begins to generate some aural interest. It is significant for what's been left out: a single Upstroke deleted from Count 1+ (the "and" note after Count 1). This single break in the steady flow of Down-Ups is refreshing, and points directly backward to identify Count 1 as the downbeat of the measure. We'll call this the Rock Strum Pattern. Try your G chord:

All you're doing is skipping past the strings on the way up after the downbeat. Don't rush. Keep your arm moving steadily and don't try to fill in that gap with another fast Downstroke. Let it breathe!

D   DUDUDU

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
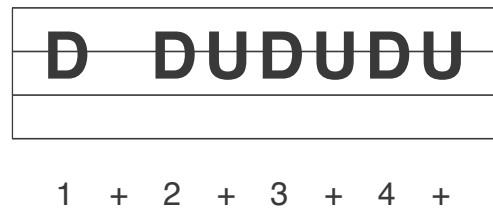
A variation on the Rock Pattern omits another Upstroke, the one at Count 3+. Your strumming is now brimming with excitement.

D   DUD   DU

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
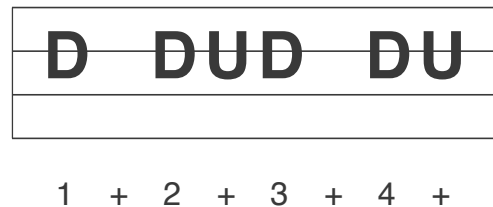
But the real value in this variation comes when you change chords after only 2 beats, which you will do regularly. It's always best to emphasize a new chord right at the change, so when you make the switch, it's like starting the main pattern over again. Let's call this the Short Rock Strum Pattern (2 beats):

One chord   Th'other chord

D   DU   **D   DU**

1 + 2 +   1 + 2 +