

Down/Up Picking

Example from *Golden Slippers* (measures 10-11)

The diagram shows two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It contains two measures of music. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers (2, 2, 3, 2, 0, 3, 0, 2, 0, 2, 3, 2, 3, 0) and a common time signature (C). Above the TAB, there are pick symbols: a square with a downward-pointing triangle (down pick) and a square with an upward-pointing triangle (up pick). The down pick symbols are placed above the notes on the first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth beats of each measure. The up pick symbols are placed above the notes on the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth beats. Beams connect the notes in pairs (2-3, 2-0, 2-3, 2-3, 3-0). A label 'Down pick symbol' with a line points to the first down pick symbol. A label 'Beams' with a line points to the first pair of notes.

The down pick motion always occurs on the **on** beats within each measure.

Example from *Golden Slippers* (measures 10-11)

The diagram shows two staves, identical to the first example. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers (2, 2, 3, 2, 0, 3, 0, 2, 0, 2, 3, 2, 3, 0) and a common time signature (C). Above the TAB, there are pick symbols: a square with a downward-pointing triangle (down pick) and a square with an upward-pointing triangle (up pick). The down pick symbols are placed above the notes on the first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth beats. The up pick symbols are placed above the notes on the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth beats. Beams connect the notes in pairs (2-3, 2-0, 2-3, 2-3, 3-0). A label 'Up pick symbol' with a line points to the first up pick symbol. A label 'Four 8th notes beamed together' with a line points to the first pair of notes.

The up pick motion always occurs on the **off** beats within each measure.

A quarter note takes up the space of one **on** beat and one **off** beat. Therefore, if the quarter note were to be divided into two 8th notes, the first 8th note would be plucked with a **down** pick motion, while the second 8th note would be plucked with an **up** pick motion. The space between the first and second notes should be “air-picked” **up** so that the pick does not touch the string. In this case the right hand moves the pick back up into position ready to pick down again on the second note. This same action applies to the quarter note in the 2nd measure above (third-from-last note). This idea of “picking air” is the secret to correct down up picking. Always follow this down/up rule with all picking in the book.