

Theory and Application



Tremolo 1

TREMOLO IS A WAY for mandolin players to sustain a note, but it has become synonymous with the sound that many people imagine when they think of the mandolin.

The movement is from the wrist, so the first exercise to do is to brush the heel of your hand up and down over the strings on the bridge. This is simply to understand the wrist movement.

I'm going to describe three ways of starting your tremolo. In each method, the plectrum should be held fairly loosely. The use of a metronome can help, but it's not essential.

① With your foot, tap out a slow 4/4 rhythm: **1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4**, etc. Down-strokes only. Now play upstrokes in between the down-strokes so that you're

playing 8 notes to a count of four. When you're ready, double the notes up to 16. That's it started. Depending on your tempo, double up again to 32 (you may have to slow down a little).

② Again, tap out a 4/4 rhythm. This time, start playing three notes on each beat, maintaining a down-up pick direction. Speed up in increments as you become comfortable with the triplet method.

③ Turn your plectrum to a 45° angle. Put the point of the plectrum between a pair of strings so that you can glide it over the strings. Start rubbing the strings, never leaving them. Increase the speed and pressure to produce your tremolo.

Now try your tremolo on *Amazing Grace*, only on the notes marked:

Amazing Grace (Walker)

hymn tune

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