

## MICKY HOWARD 8TH APRIL 2020

### IMPROVERS GTR GROUP

Howdy there, (Cowboy talk for a Cowboy tune) hope you are all keeping well and keeping busy in these times of home confinement. (Don't forget to get some gentle exercise though). So, talking of confinement I thought it might be good to look at the Johnny Cash song Folsom Prison Blues. A simple song chord wise but it has an interesting mixture of strumming and picking in its rhythmic pattern.

	↓	*	↓	↑	↓	*	↓	↑		↓	*	↓	↑	↓	*	↓	↑	
Beats	1		2		3		4			1		2		3		4		

| **"Dum cha-kka Dum cha-kka | Dum cha-kka Dum cha-kka"** |

is how this rhythm sounds and is played over 2 bars. Each chord is played for an 8 beat count.

The trick here is that on the **"Dum"** strokes which are on the **1<sup>st</sup>** and **3<sup>rd</sup>** beat of each bar, you pick bass notes to compliment the chord which gives it the rolling Johnny Cash rhythm guitar style. The Chords used in this song are well known to you and they are **A**, **D**, and **E**. So to the picking pattern.....

## FOR THE **A** CHORD

BEAT 1 (**Dum**) pick open **A** string followed by *Cha-kka* on chord **A**.

BEAT 2 (**Dum**) pick open **E** string followed by *Cha-kka* on chord **A**.

## FOR THE **D** CHORD.

BEAT 1 (**Dum**) pick open **D** string followed by *Cha-kka* on chord **D**.

BEAT 2 (**Dum**) pick open **A** string followed by *Cha-kka* on chord **D**.

## FOR THE **E** CHORD.

BEAT 1 (**Dum**) pick open **E** string followed by *Cha-kka* on chord **E**.

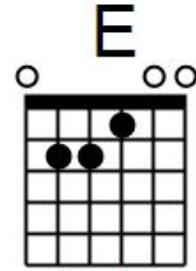
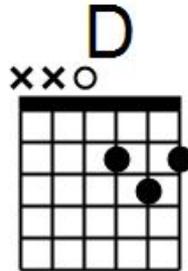
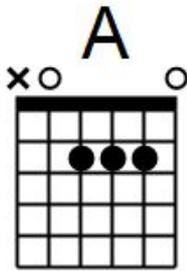
BEAT 2 (**Dum**) pick the **B** note on the **A** string (already fretted at 2<sup>nd</sup> fret in the **E** chord shape), followed by *Cha-kka* still on chord **E**.

Remember to keep the chords fretted whilst picking the open strings.

You can try out these patterns for all of the chords individually to get a hang of them before trying them out in the song if you like.

# FOLSOM PRISON BLUES

by Johnny Cash



*Verse 1*

A

A

I hear the train a comin' It's rolling round the bend

A

A

And I ain't seen the sunshine since I don't know when,

D

D

A

I'm stuck in Folsom prison, and time keeps draggin' on

*A (for 8 beats)*

E

E

A

But that train keeps a rollin' on down to San Anton

*A (for 8 beats)*

*Verse 2*

A

A

When I was just a baby my mama told me, son

A

A

Always be a good boy, don't ever play with guns.

D

D

A

But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die

*A (for 8 beats)*

E

E

A

When I hear that whistle blowing I hang my head and cry

*A (for 8 beats)*

### Verse 3

A

A

I bet there's rich folks eating in a fancy dining car

A

A

They're probably drinkin' coffee and smoking big cigars.

D

D

A

Well I know I had it coming, I know I can't be free

*A (for 8 beats)*

E

E

But those people keep a movin' And that's what tortures

A

me

*A (for 8 beats)*

Verse 4

A

A

Well if they'd free me from this prison, If that railroad train  
was mine

A

A

I bet I'd move it all a little further down the line

D

D

A

Far from Folsom prison, that's where I want to stay

*A (for 8 beats)*

E

E

A

And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my blues away

A

*A. (LET LAST CHORD HANG.)*

If you want to really add an authentic Johnny Cash touch you could try palm muting. That is, gently resting the palm of your hand on the strings just in front of the bridge, to get that deadened “Country music” type thud on the picked bass notes. If it sounds too dead then try moving closer to the bridge and resting the edge of your hand on the strings more lightly. It takes a little practice to be able to mute and pick at the same time, but hey! that's why we are all here.

*Take Care, and be safe. See you all soon. Mickey.*