

# How to Write Double Stop Riffs



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Key: C (the bigger idea work in all keys)

Tempo: Any

Chords needed: C, G, Am, F, Dm, Em

Video Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KdtjzT2xGw>

Original Riff From I'm Yours:

	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	
		C	G	Am	F	
A	-----3/5	3-----3/5	2-----3/5	-----	-----	-----
E	-----3/5	3-----3/5	3-----3/5	5-----5-	5-----	-----
C	-----	-----	-----	4-----4-	5-----	-----
G	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

This riff starts off on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of the A and the E string. Those notes are C and G, both notes are in the C chord and they are the root and the 5<sup>th</sup> of the key, making them the most stable notes in the key. The root and the 5<sup>th</sup> are a great place to start to establish a strong sense of tonality.

There is a slide, staying in key (note all the notes so far are in the C major pentatonic scale as well) and then they return to the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of both the A and E string, making them the C and G notes. Let's examine a C barre chord

A|3---|  
 E|3---|  
 C|4---|  
 G|5---|

Note the two red notes where are riff finishes, these are called "chord tones" which mean notes that are both in the chord of C, using chord tones from the scale will create a strong sense of harmony.

	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	1 2 3 4 &	
		C	G	Am	F	
A	-----3/5	3-----3/5	2-----3/5	-----	-----	-----
E	-----3/5	3-----3/5	3-----3/5	5-----5-	5-----	-----
C	-----	-----	-----	4-----4-	5-----	-----
G	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If we look at the first beat of each measure, the riff lands right on the chord tones, playing two notes at a time, or what is known as a "double stop"

```

C G Am F
A|3--2-----|
E|3--3--5--5-|
C|-----4--5-|
G|-----|

```

The next thing to do is to take a chord progression and apply these ideas to your own playing.

Our chord progression will look like this.

```

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & |
Dm Em Dm Em Dm Em Dm C
D U X U D U X U D U X U D D D D

```

A much sadder and more somber tone, but we still have potential to create a fun and memorable riff with these ideas, this is what I came up with, lets break it down.

```

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & |
Dm Em Dm Em Dm Em Dm C
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|
E|--1-x-3-----x--|--1-x-3-----x--|--1-x-3-----x--|1--x--0--x--|
C|2--x-4-----x--|2--x-4-----x--|2--x-4-----x--|2--x--0--x--|
G|-----|-----|-----|-----|

```

The mutes are merely taps to help keep rhythm and are completely optional, but we can see right away in this riff we are only using chord tones when we compare the notes in the riff to the basic chord shapes.

```

Dm Em C
A|0---2---3--|
E|1---3---0--|
C|2---4---0--|
G|2---0---0--|

```

In the tabs in the video I included the option of adding a slide into the E minor, just to give it a little bit more flavor.

```

1 & 2 & 3 4 | 1 & 2 & 3 4 | 1 & 2 & 3 4 | 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & |
Dm Em Dm Em Dm Em Dm C
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|
E|--1-x-1/3--x--|--1-x-1/3--x--|--1-x-1/3--x--|1--x--0--x--|
C|2--x-2/4--x--|2--x-2/4--x--|2--x-2/4--x--|2--x--0--x--|
G|-----|-----|-----|-----|

```

The next step is to take some chord progression from your favorite song and create your own riffs, enjoy!

