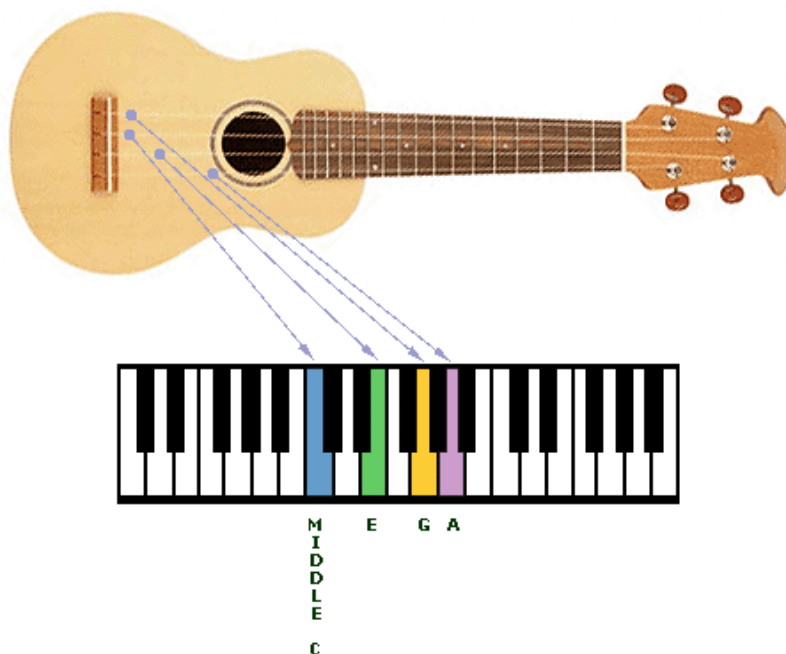


Notes for the beginning ukulele player

An introduction to basic music theory for
the ukulele

www.lakesidepress.com/UkeSyllabus.pdf



By Larry Martin

drlarry437@gmail.com

Notes for the beginning ukulele player

An introduction to basic music theory for the
ukulele

www.lakesidepress.com/UkeSyllabus.pdf

By Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com

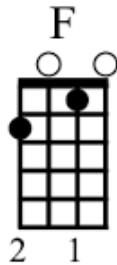
First placed online June 27, 2016
Last revision November 3, 2023
<http://www.lakesidepress.com/UkeSyllabus.pdf>

Lakeside Press
The Villages, FL 32163

First, Take the Uke Quiz

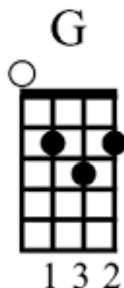
- If you score 16 or better in this 20-question quiz (without looking up the answers), you are fairly knowledgeable about uke music theory. You can use the Syllabus as a refresher, and perhaps pick up a few new things.
- If the information asked in these questions simply doesn't hold any interest, then this Syllabus is not for you.
- If, however, you have a moderate to low score *and* you find the questions interesting, then you should benefit from the Syllabus.
- Finally, if you don't like quizzes, or find them intimidating, but want to learn basic music theory, then skip to the [Preface](#). (And if prefaces bore you, skip that and go right to the [Table of Contents](#), page 9).

1. The notes of the F chord, as shown below on the fret board (reading left to right), are:



- a) G-C-F-A
- b) A-C-F-A
- c) G-C-F#-A
- d) G#-C-F-A

2. The notes of the G chord as shown below on the fret board (reading left to right), are:

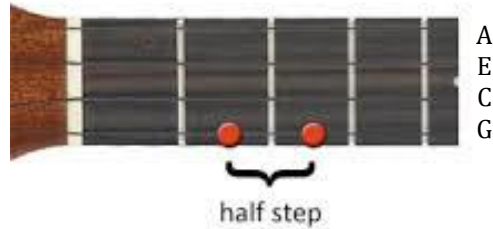


- a) G-D-G-B
- b) G-D-F#-Bb
- c) G-D-G-Bb
- d) G-D#-G-Bb

3. The IV-V-I chord progression in the key of A is:

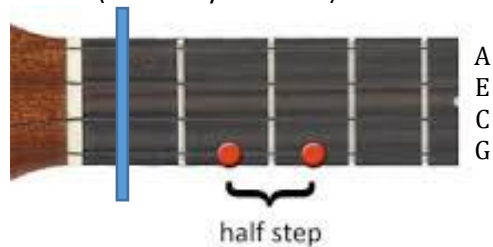
- a) A-D-G
- b) D-E-A
- c) D-F-A
- d) A-D-A

4. The fret board is standard-tuned to G-C-E-A. What note would be played by pressing the first red dot (closest to nut) and picking that string higher up the fret board?



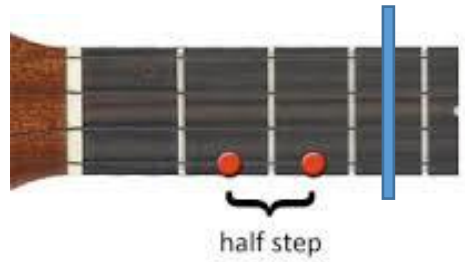
- a) Ab
- b) G
- c) G#
- d) A

5. The notes played picking each string (starting with the G string) when the first fret is barred (shown by blue line) are:



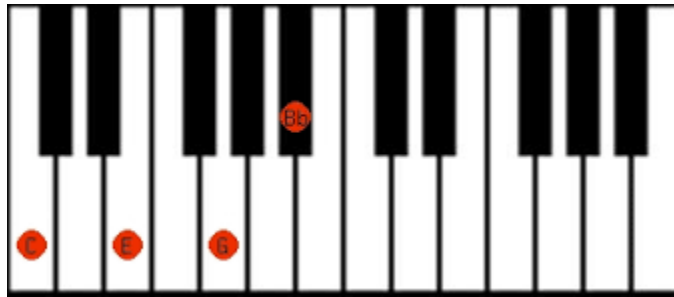
- a) G – C – E – A
- b) A – D – F – A#
- c) G# - C# - F – A#
- d) G# - D – F - B

6. The notes played picking each string above the 4th fret bar (blue line), starting with the G string), are:



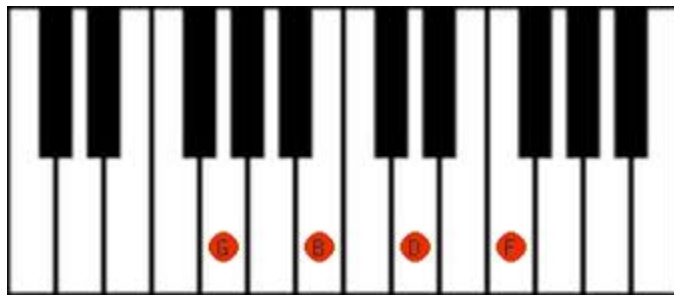
- a) B – E – G – C
- b) B – E – G# – C#
- c) C – F – A – D
- d) A# – D# – G – C

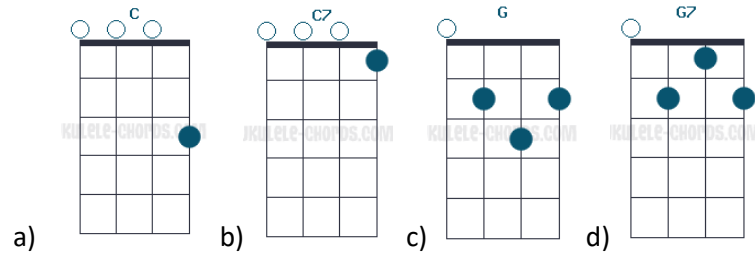
7. The notes on this piano keyboard represent which chord diagram?



- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

8. The notes on this piano keyboard represent which chord diagram?

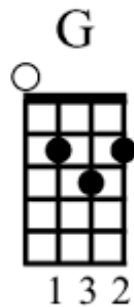




9. In playing a movable chord, what is the minimum number of strings that must be pressed?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

10. Below is the G chord, played with fingers 1, 3, 2. You can go from here to the Em chord by using your fourth finger to press:

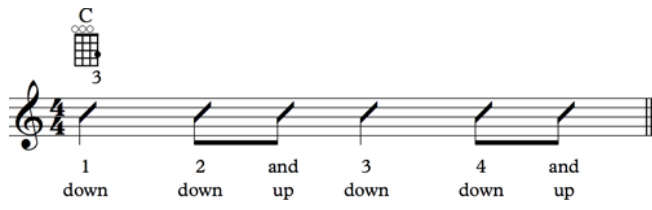


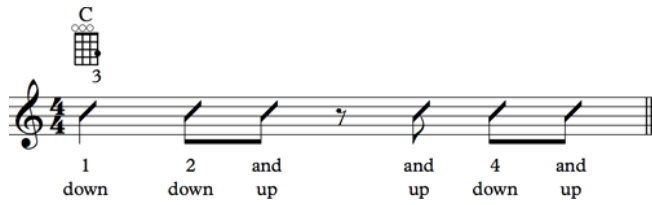
- a) G string, 1st fret
- b) C string, 3rd fret
- c) A string, 3rd fret
- d) C string, 4th fret

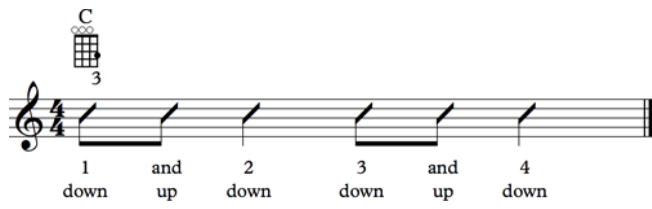
11. If you strum all the strings open in a standard tune ukulele (G-C-E-A), you will play which two chords?

- a) C6 and Am7
- b) CMaj7 and Am7
- c) A7 and C7
- d) A and CMaj7

12. The calypso strumming pattern is:

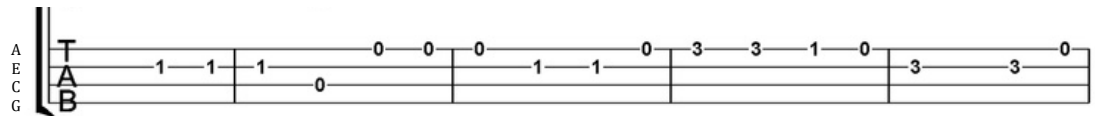
a) 

b) 

c) 

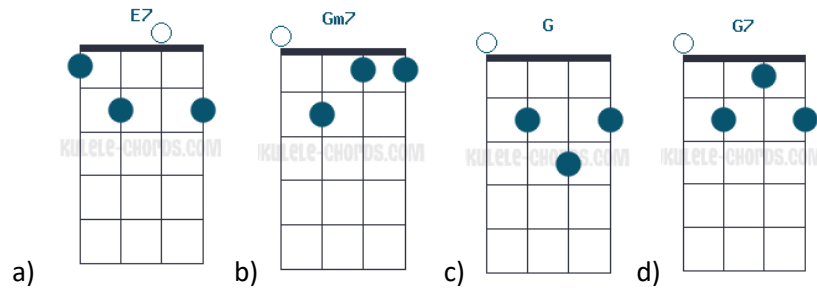
d) None of the above.

13. The following ukulele tablature is from the song Clementine. The notes of the first two measures are:

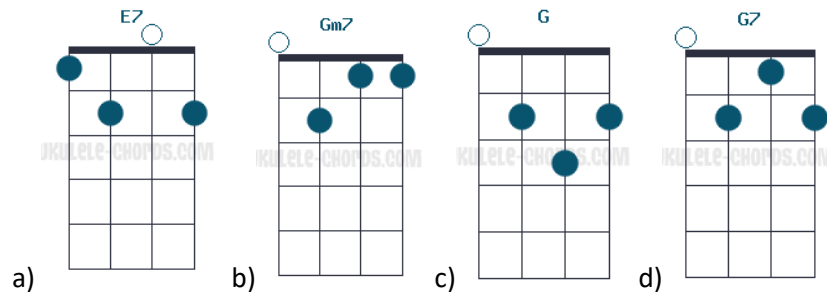


- a) F – F – F – C – A – A
- b) G – G – G – F – A# – A#
- c) F# – F# – F# – C# – A – A
- d) E – E – E – D – A – A


14. Starting with the G string (leftmost in the diagram), what chord is played by tablature 0-2-1-2?



15. Starting with the G string (leftmost in the diagram), what chord is played by tablature 0-2-3-2?



The following 5 questions are True - False.

16. One F# immediately following the treble clef sign (as shown) signifies key of D. 
17. The lowest note you can play on the uke turned to G-C-E-A, with a re-entrant G string, is middle C.
18. The Hawaiian D7 chord does not contain the D note.
19. E7 can be substituted for E in the key of A
20. The I-IV-V chord progression in key of F is F-B-C.

[Click here for Answers \(on page 8\)](#)

Preface

The ukulele is not easy but *is* easier than most other instruments for an adult to learn – compared, say, to the dulcimer, guitar, piano or any wind instrument. It also has advantages over three flute-like instruments adults are often drawn to as beginning instruments -- the recorder, the Native American flute, and the pennywhistle. Those wind instruments are not designed to play chords, just the melody line, so they are more limited than the uke, which can do both.

For beginners, one of the best things about the ukulele is that most uke clubs are very welcoming. In a typical club session no one can hear you (except perhaps the person sitting next to you). If you joined any other instrument group – playing flute, horn, guitar or dulcimer, for example – with the same level of inexperience, you would be outed instantly. The uke is forgiving because it doesn't carry far and in a jam session good players or singers usually provide the rhythm and melody. In many sessions where I have fumbled on chord changes or lost the strum pattern, no one has ever noticed (as far as I am aware).

The downside of this easy acceptability is that most people who play in a uke group get by with just strumming along, so there's little incentive to learn about the makeup of individual chords, what notes are generated by the finger patterns, or why certain chords are played in some songs and not others. People just come to play and have fun. Which makes sense -- the club is not a classroom.

Still...for the non-musician, the more you understand how the ukulele works, the better player you are likely to become. This idea is stated clearly by professional player Brett McQueen, creator of one of the top uke web sites, ukuleletricks.com:

Why You Should Know This Stuff

Brett McQueen

I've said it before. You can get by without knowing a whole lot of theory, but theory helps you to articulate in your mind what you're actually playing. It's a language that allows you as a musician and artist to communicate the things you want to communicate.

This syllabus is by a novice who became interested in how the ukulele works, and now wants to teach other beginners. In that sense the Syllabus has a unique perspective. It helps that I know what we don't know. Before playing the uke I had no musical knowledge and played no other instrument. I am far from what anyone would call a "musician." I am not a music teacher, but prefer to consider myself a "music explainer." If you play the uke, and have any interest in how the instrument "works" to make music, you should find this syllabus helpful. It is also chock full of links to internet videos and other sources to enhance your understanding.

To produce this syllabus I have freely used images from the internet. These images are copyrighted by the original creators. Thus this work cannot be used for any commercial purpose, and should be viewed as a free teaching aid. At the same time, anyone should feel free to use my text for their own purposes.

To get the most out of this syllabus you should have a uke tuned to G-C-E-A, a tuner (shown below, attached to the uke's head), know at least a few basic chords, and have some experience playing in a group setting (even if only a few times).



In each section are short quizzes to help you review the material. Look for the yellow headings **QUIZ TIME**. I strongly recommend you do each Quiz before proceeding to the next section. Answers are provided after Section 10. Also included are several appendices with additional material. Some of this material is truly beyond beginner level, but is included to show how much more there is to learn about this amazing instrument.

Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com

Answers to “First, Take the Uke Quiz”

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. d
5. c
6. b
7. b
8. d
9. d
10. d
11. a
12. b
13. a
14. d
15. c
16. False; it is key of G
17. True
18. True
19. True
20. False; it is F-Bb-C

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CLICK ON ANY SECTION OR APPENDIX)

SECTION 1: NOTES OF THE UKULELE	10
SECTION 2: MUSICAL KEYS AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS	16
SECTION 3: THE UKE FRET BOARD.....	26
SECTION 4: COMMON CHORDS AND CHORD SUBSTITUTIONS.....	30
SECTION 5: LEAD AND SONG SHEETS, AND CHORDS	32
SECTION 6: CHORD VEXATION AND MOVABLE CHORDS	38
SECTION 7. CHORD TRICKS	43
SECTION 8: STRUMMING.....	50
SECTION 9: PLAYING MELODY ON THE UKULELE	56
SECTION 10 – ANATOMY OF UKULELE SHEET MUSIC.....	67
QUIZ TIME	71
ANSWERS TO QUIZ TIME.....	72
WEB SITE RECOMMENDATIONS	74
APPENDIX A: UKULELE TYPES	76
APPENDIX B: THE C MAJOR SCALE	82
APPENDIX C: THE UKE FRET BOARD IN BOTH SHARPS & FLATS	90
APPENDIX D: BASIC CHORDS FOR THE UKULELE – FROM 6 DIFFERENT WEB SITES	91
APPENDIX E: AUGMENTED AND DIMINISHED CHORDS	92
APPENDIX F: SUSPENDED CHORDS	102
APPENDIX G: HOW TO USE THE UKULELE CAPO – BASIC THEORY	108
APPENDIX H: RANGE OF THE UKULELE AND THE LOW G STRING	111
APPENDIX I: BEYOND THE BASICS: CHUNKING, HAMMER-ON & OTHER TECHNIQUES	116
APPENDIX J: FINGERPICKING	124

SECTION 1: NOTES OF THE UKULELE

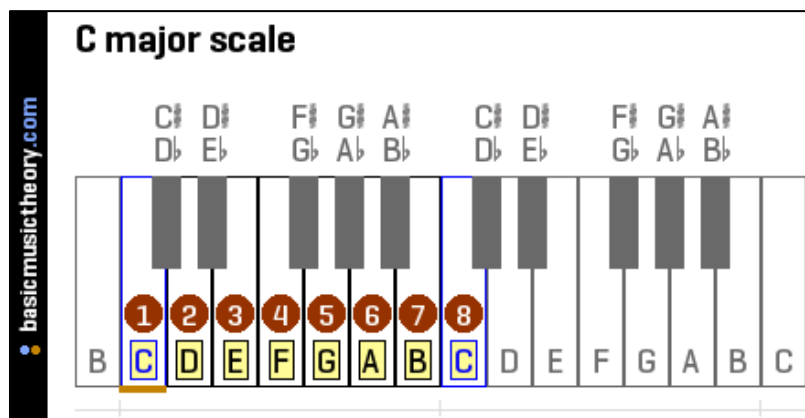
The best way to understand your uke and the notes it can play is by reference to the piano keyboard. Throughout this syllabus I show sections of the keyboard as they relate to the uke. You will get the most out of the syllabus if you can experiment on a keyboard – any keyboard. If you have ready access to a keyboard or piano, great. If not, I recommend going online for a free piano simulator, at <http://virtualpiano.net/>. (If you prefer some other simulated online keyboard, that's fine.)



When you press a note on this simulated keyboard using your mouse or trackpad pointer, the name of the note shows at top, as in this figure from the simulator web site. The numbers you see when each key is pressed only refer to the keys of this particular simulator; the notes of the ukulele tuned to G-C-E-A would be G-32, C-25, E-29 and A-34.

Musical Scales

All music is based on musical scales, the easiest and most common of which is the C major scale. The C major scale is played on the piano with just the white keys, as shown below. The C scale is C-D-E-F-G-A-B. To these 7 notes of the scale is usually included a repeat of the first note, which is then number 8.



You can form a scale starting with any note of the keyboard. There are specific patterns to these scales. Some are major scales (one pattern), some are minor scales (another pattern). *How* the scales are formed is not important for our purposes. You just need to know that each scale has a different arrangement of notes, in a specific order. Of the major scales, only C major uses just the white keys on the piano. The other major scales use one or more black keys.

Note that each black key is labeled with both a sharp (#) and a flat (b). What to call a specific black key (sharp or flat) depends on the scale you're in, and is not important for ukulele players. Thus you can call the black key between C and D a C# or a Db; doesn't matter. (If you are composing music it does matter.)

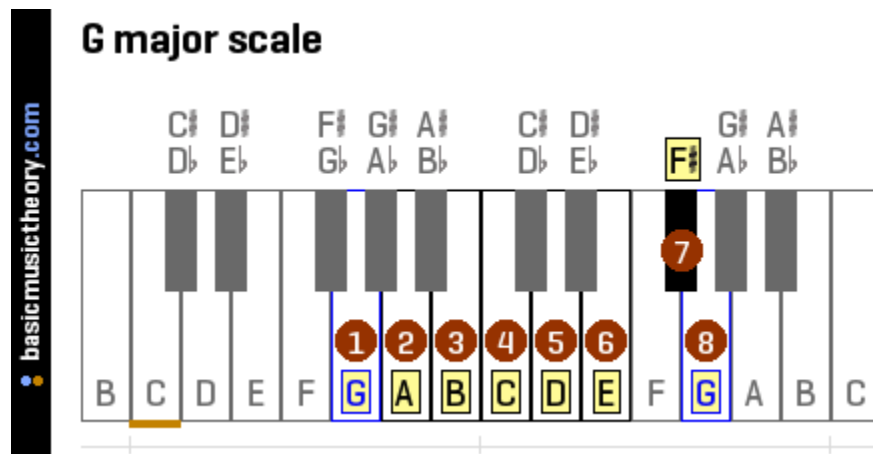
To repeat, the C major scale (including a repeat of the C) is:
C - D - E - F - G - A - B - C

Between the eight keys of the C major scale are five more keys, all black keys. Here they are labeled as sharps. These black keys are NOT part of the C major scale.

C - C# - D - D# - E - F - F# - G - G# - A - A# - B - C

I'll show one more scale, the G major scale, and then get to the ukulele. The G major scale includes one sharp, the F#. Here are the 8 notes of the G major scale, including a repeat of the G.

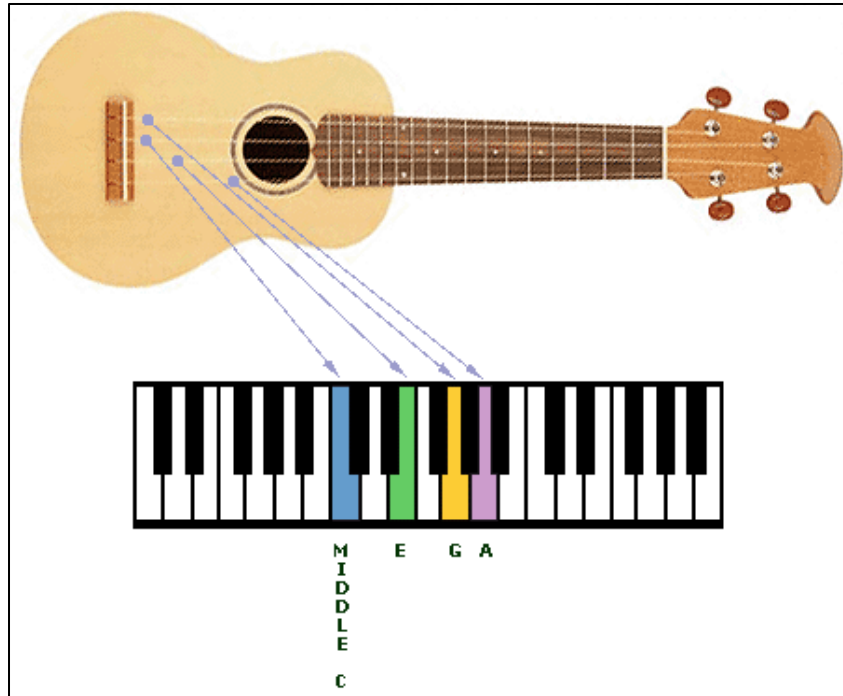
G - A - B - C - D - E - F# - G



Notes on the ukulele

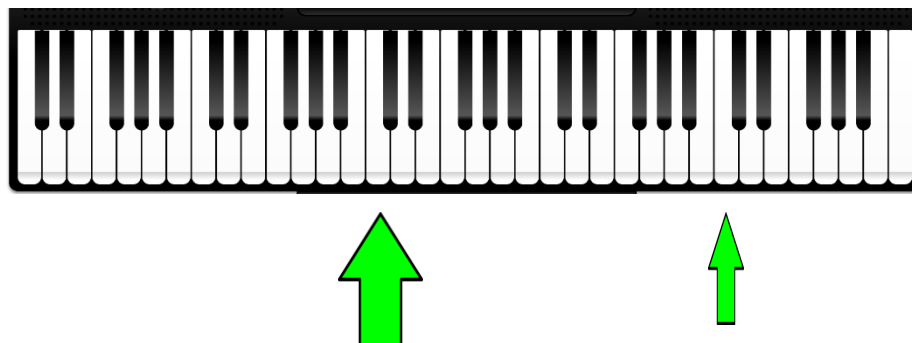
It's easy to visualize the notes on the keyboard, where the sharps and flats are all black keys. If you go to your keyboard and alternate playing the white and black notes, you can appreciate the differences in the way they sound.

The notes you “see” on the piano are also on your uke fret board; they are just not as obvious. To visualize the notes on the fret board let’s first look at the four strings of the ukulele and relate them to the piano keyboard.



Middle C is the lowest note you can play with the standard-tuned uke, which is G-C-E-A. In terms of pitch, going from lowest to highest, the notes are C-E-G-A. However, in terms of order of strings, we call the tuning G-C-E-A. Picking these four strings in succession (G-C-E-A) will give the tune noted in practically every uke book as “My Dog Has Fleas.”

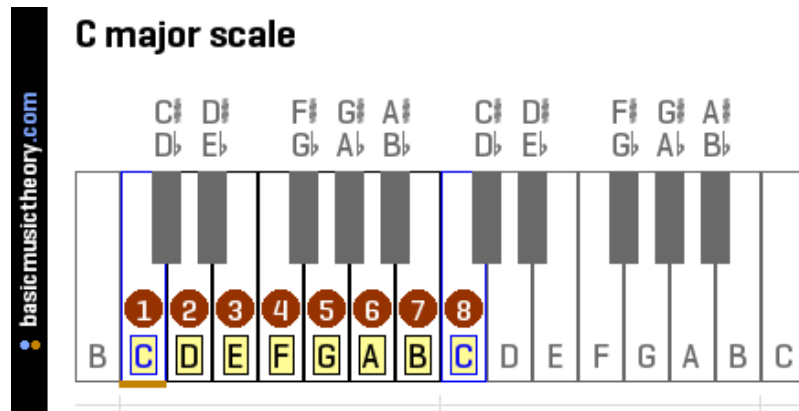
Where is middle C on the piano? The thick green arrow shows middle C, which is the lowest note you can play on the uke, with standard G-C-E-A tuning. The highest note will depend on the size of your uke, but generally it is two octaves up from middle C, shown by the thin green arrow.



It is obvious that the uke has a much narrower range than the piano, or most other instruments for that matter. Still, it can play a large amount of popular music.

Half Steps and Whole Steps

A very important concept in understanding your uke is the difference between half steps and whole steps. A half step is simply the distance or “interval” between two adjacent keys on the piano. Here again is the C major scale.



The interval between C and C# is a half step, because those are two adjacent keys; there is no key between them. Similarly, between C# and D is a half step, and so forth.

Note that there are no black keys between E and F, and between B and C. Thus the interval between E and F is a half step, as is the interval between B and C. It follows, of course, that the interval between C and D is two half steps or one *whole step*, as is the interval between D and E, between E and F#, etc. Here are the half steps and whole steps between middle C and the next C, easily appreciated by reference to the keyboard.

Half Steps

C-C#
C#-D
D-D#
D#-E
E-F
F-F#
F#-G
G-G#
G#-A
A-A#
A#-B
B-C

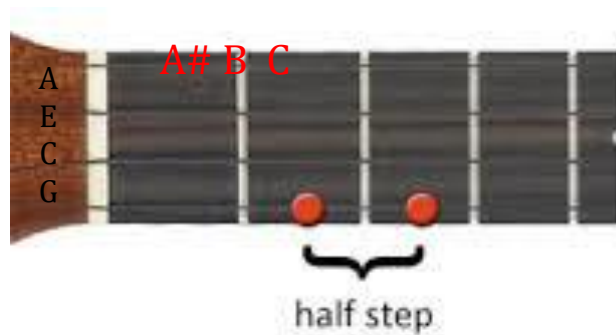
Whole Steps

C-D
C#-D#
D-E
D#-F
E-F#
F-G
F#-G#
G-A
G#-A#
A-B
A#-C
B-C#

The ukulele is also made up of half steps and whole steps. The distance between any two adjacent frets is a half step. Two half steps equal a whole step.

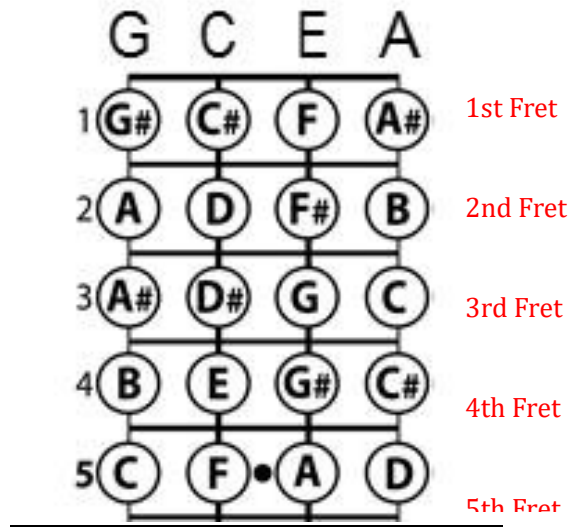


Now we have the information to take a closer look at the uke fret board. If you “pluck” any of the open strings, without pressing down on any fret, you will play the note of that string, i.e., G, C, E or A. When you press a fret (and here “fret” means the space between the vertical strips, not the strips themselves), you will get a different note; between two successive frets you will get a half step higher (if you are going up the fretboard, toward the sound hole). Thus, pressing the first fret of A string gives A \sharp ; 2nd fret of A string give a B; third fret of A string gives a C; etc.



If it’s not clear why these notes are played by pressing these frets, go back to the piano keyboard; you will see that there is a half step difference between A and A \sharp , between A \sharp and B, and between B and C.

If we rotate the fret board to the right, and label all the first five frets, we get this important diagram.



Using your tuner, do the following:

Press 1st fret of A string. What note do you get when you pick the A string? A#
 Press 2nd fret of E string. What note do you get when you pick the E string? F#
 Press 3rd fret of C string. What note do you get when you pick the C string? D#
 Press 4th fret of G string. What note do you get when you pick the G string? B
 Etc.

Practice this up and down the first five frets of your ukulele. Check each note with your tuner. Remember, between any two adjacent frets is a half step. Skip a fret on any given string and the two notes are a whole step apart. If you play the notes on the piano or piano simulator you will better appreciate the difference in sound between half steps and whole steps; then see if you can appreciate the difference on your uke.

QUIZ TIME – SECTION 1 –Notes of the Ukulele

- 1) How many steps are there between F and G?
- 2) How many steps are there between B and D?
- 3) What note do you get when you press the 4th fret of the C string, and pluck the C string?
- 4) What note do you get when you press the 5th fret of the G string and pluck the G string?
- 5) How many complete octaves can a standard-tuned ukulele play?

SECTION 2: MUSICAL KEYS AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Every piece of music is in some “key.” Most popular and folk songs are in one of the following keys: C, D, F, G, and A. Each of these keys is based on the same-named scale of notes. Thus the key of C includes all the chords derived from that C major scale. The key of D includes all the chords derived from D major scale, etc. (When there is no qualifier of the key, such as “major” or “minor”, it is assumed to be the major key.) Many songs are written – and can be played – in more than one key. For example, “Clementine” is commonly played in either key of C or key of F. Thus, depending on the music at hand, it might be played with chords derived from the C major scale or with chords derived from the F major scale.

Since each musical key has specific chords, it follows that *the key determines which chords are played in the song*. If the singer announces the song will be sung in C, you don’t want to play the chords that go with the key of G; it won’t sound right. The key of C plays the natural F note; the key of G plays F#. Big difference. So everyone should be playing and singing in the same key for any particular song.

There are several ways to note the “key” of a song. On most song sheets used in jam sessions, the key should be evident in one of two ways.

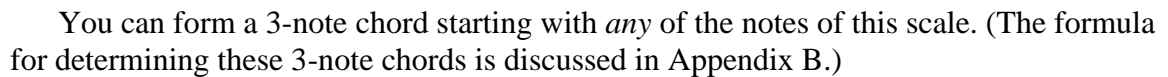
- 1) It is printed at the beginning of the song, as is shown here for the opening stanzas of *City of New Orleans*: “Key C.” Couldn’t be any clearer than that.
- 2) The key is denoted by the first and last chords. In this song the first chord is C, as is the last chord of the entire song. When they are different, the rule is that the last chord determines the likely key.

City of New Orleans Key C

C G C
Riding on the City of New Orleans
Am F C G
Illinois Central, Monday morning rail
C G C
Fifteen cars and fifteen restless riders
Am G C
Three conductors, twenty five sacks of mail
Am Em
All along the southbound odyssey the train pulls out
of Kankakee
G D
Rolls along past houses, farms and fields
Am Em
Passing towns that have no name, freight yards full of
old black men
G C
And the grave-yards of rusted automobiles.
Chorus=====

F G C
Good morning ‘merica, how are you?
Am F C G
Don’t you know me, I’m your native son
C G Am
I’m the train they call the City of New Orleans
Bb F G C
I’ll be gone five hundred miles when the day is done.
=====

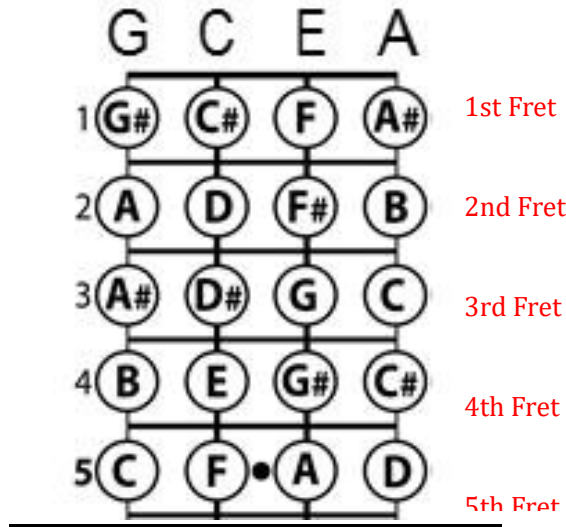
A chord is simply three or more notes played together. Music in the key of C will use chords from the C major scale, which is C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C. Here is the C major scale on the keyboard.



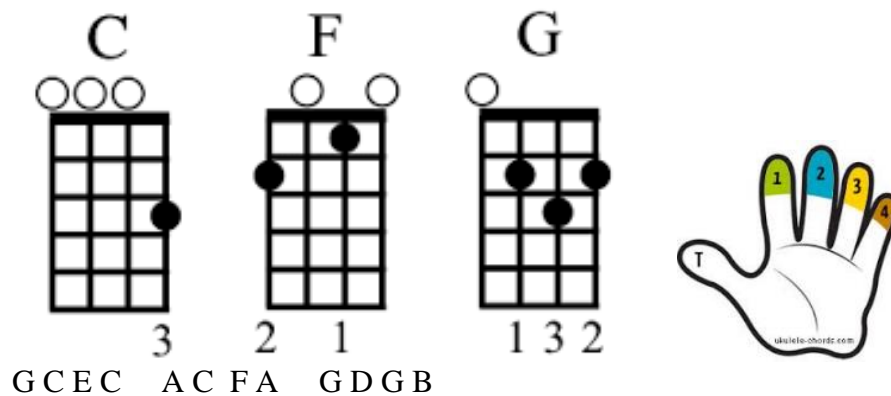
C chord is C-E-G – the “1” (or I) chord
F chord is F-A-C – the “4” (or IV) chord
G chord is G-B-D – the “5” (or V) chord



Before we get to these three chords on the uke I want to again show notes obtained on the first five frets (this was introduced in Section 1). Pressing the G string 1st fret and plucking that string will give G#; pressing C string 1st fret and plucking that string will give C#; pressing A string 3rd fret and plucking that string will give C; etc. I highly recommend you become familiar with the notes on the first five frets.



Standard chord diagrams are shown with this vertical configuration, omitting the labeling of individual notes over the frets. Here are the I-IV-V chords of the C major scale as they are played on the uke fret board. When finger notation is shown, as it is here, 1 is the index finger, 2 is the middle finger, 3 is the ring finger and 4 is the pinkie. Below the chords I've also placed the note played by each string when you strum the chord



PLAY THESE CHORDS! Then, with your tuner, pick each note individually, to see what the notes are.

Chord Progressions

When these three chords are played in a piece of music they form what is called a “chord progression.” *Most popular music is based on the I-IV-V (1-4-5) chord progression.* Why? Because this progression is most pleasing to the brain. That explanation may sound simplistic, but think about it this way. Song writers didn’t decide out of the blue that I-IV-V was the best progression. It’s the other way around. When 1-IV-V sounded better than most other progressions, it began to appear in more and more songs. It’s not at all intuitive; it’s trial and error. I-IV-V is more pleasing than other chord progressions, so is used more often.

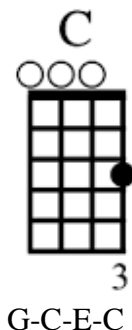
If you know the I-IV-V chord progression for each of the common keys, you know enough to strum chords for thousands of songs.

The I-IV-V Chord Progression for Key of C

Here is the 1-IV-V chord progression for the key of C.

<u>Musical Key</u>	<u>I-IV-V Chords</u>
C	C = C-E-G
	F = F-A-C
	G = G-B-D

The C chord (or I chord in this scale) is played with the ring finger (#3) on the A string, third fret, as shown in the chord diagram.



When you strum you will thus play the open strings to get G, C and E, but the A string will not play A; it will play C. Check this out with your tuner. Thus, when you strum all four strings you are playing G-C-E-C: the C chord.

Before we get to F and G chords, do you notice the difference between a uke chord and a piano chord with the same notes? On a real piano or keyboard you can play the notes of a chord simultaneously, using three fingers. Or, you can play them one at a time, what is commonly called a “broken chord”: C followed by E and then G. In the ukulele, when you strum you can only hit one string at a time, no matter how fast your fingers.

Piano:

C-E-G played simultaneously

or

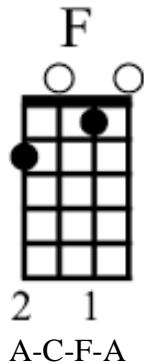
C-E-G played one note at a time, in succession (broken chord)

Uke:

C-E-G played one note at a time, in quick succession by strumming (broken chord)

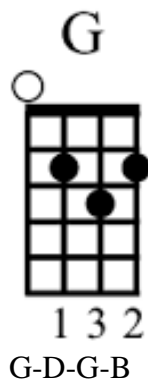
Thus all uke chords are, in a sense, broken chords. Still, the C-E-G of the uke is the same as the C-E-G of the piano, and you should frequently refer to the keyboard to understand these chords. The piano is by far the best instrument to visualize the chords you'll be playing on the uke (or on any other instrument, such as the guitar).

Now we come to the F chord in this I-IV-V chord progression for the key of C.



It is fingered as shown above in the chord diagram. When you strum you will play the open strings C and A. The G string is pressed at the second fret to give an A, and the E string is pressed at the first fret to give an F. Pluck these strings with your tuner in place to confirm the notes. Thus, when you strum you are playing A-C-F-A: the F chord.

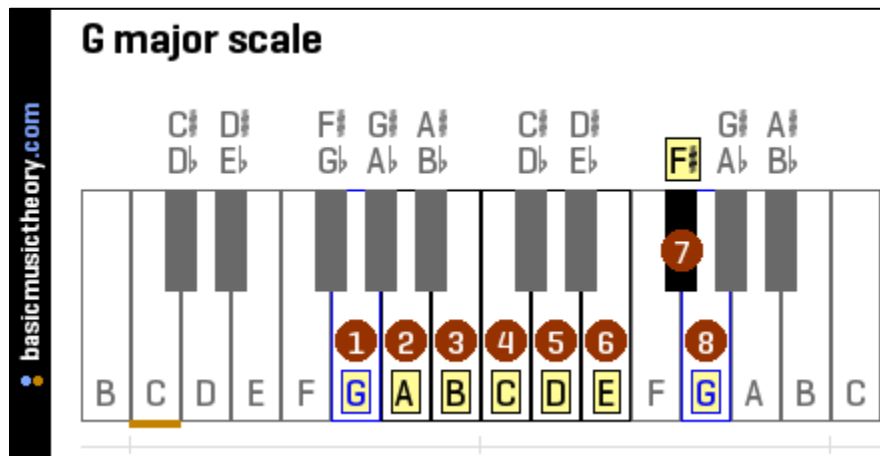
The G chord is played as shown.



When you strum you will play the open string G. The C string is pressed at the 2nd fret to give a D. The E string is pressed at the third fret to give a G. The A string is pressed at the 2nd fret to give a B. Thus, when you strum you are playing G-D-G-B: the G chord. Pluck these strings with your tuner in place to confirm these notes.

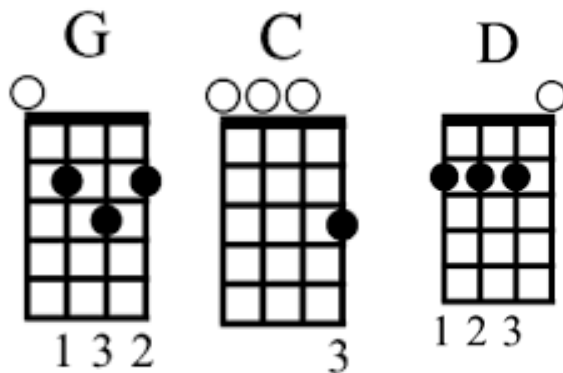
The I-IV-V Chord Progression for Key of G

You can do this exercise with each of the other popular musical keys: D, F, G, and A. Let's look at the key of G, which seems to be the 2nd most popular key, after C. Here is the G major scale on the piano keyboard. Unlike C major, it has one sharp: F#.



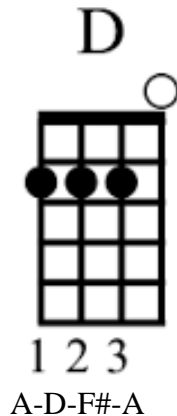
Here are the 1-IV-V chords for the G Major scale.

Musical Key	I-IV-V Chords
G	G = G-B-D C = C-E-G D = D-F#-A



The G chord and C chord are exactly the same as the G and C chords in C major (described above). However, instead of the F chord we now have a D chord.

The D chord is played as shown.

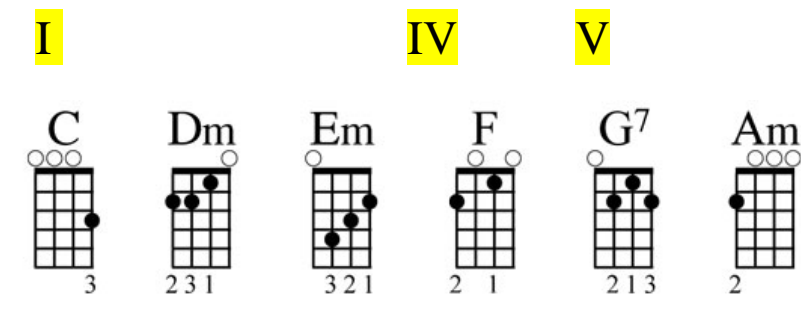


The only open string is the A string. The G, C, and E strings are all pressed at the 2nd fret. Thus when you strum the G string, you are playing an A. When you strum the C string you are playing a D. And when you strum the E string you are playing an F#. Check these out with your tuner. The result: A-D-F#-A: The D chord.

Substituting V7 for V in Chord Progressions.

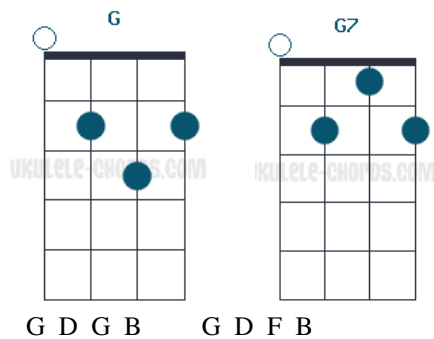
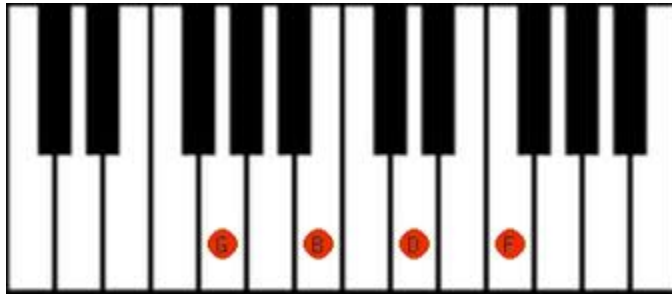
When you see chord progressions in uke books and in printed music, you are apt to find a “V7” chord substituting for the V chord. So called “seventh chords” are very common in popular music, e.g., G7, C7, D7. Each of these “V7” chords is very close to the corresponding V chord in a I-IV-V chord progression, and is often preferred over the V chord. (This is an example of chord substitution, which will be brought up again in a later section.) Below are chords for the C major scale from Ukulele Hunt, showing G7 instead of G.

C Major Chords (chords in the key of C)



A 7th chord adds a fourth note to the basic 3-note triad. Below is G7 on the piano keyboard, along with the G and G7 chords shown in uke chord diagrams. The G7 adds a fourth note, F, to the standard 3-note G chord of G-B-D.

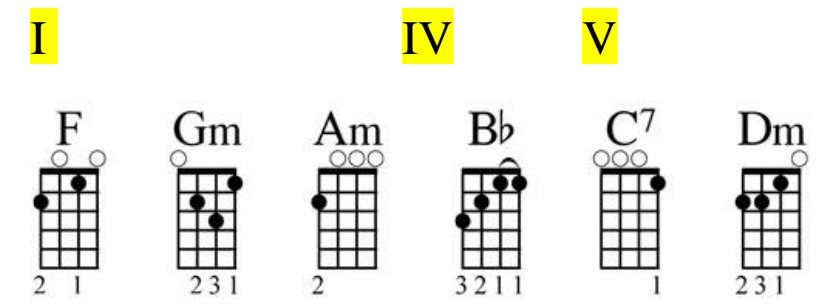
G7 Chord



The difference between G and G7 is that the latter includes an F note. Otherwise, G7 and G share the G-D-B notes.

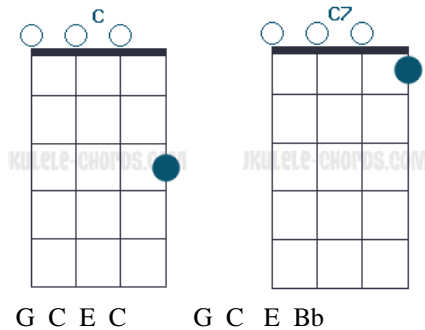
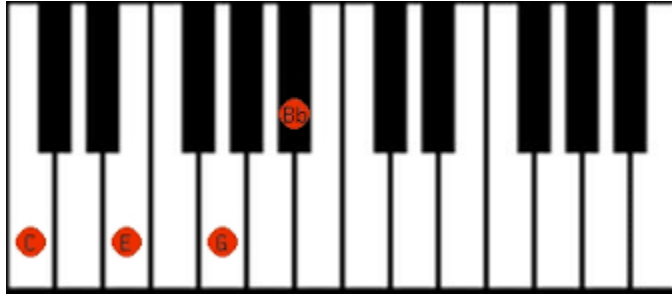
F Major Chords (chords in the key of F)

Below are chords for the F major scale from Ukulele Hunt, showing C7 instead of C.

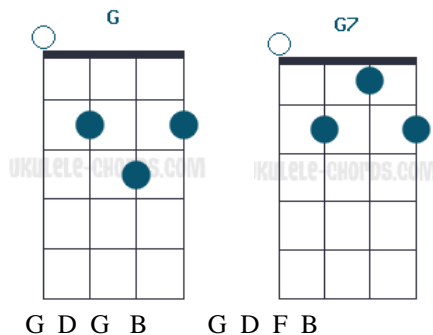


Below is C7 on the piano keyboard, along with the C and C7 chords shown in uke chord diagrams. The C7 adds a fourth note, Bb, to the standard 3-note C chord of C-E-G.

C7 Chord



The difference between C and C7 is that the latter includes a Bb note. Otherwise, C7 and C share the G, C and E notes.



QUIZ TIME – SECTION 2 – Keys and Chord Progressions

- 1) What extra note does C7 chord have compared to C chord?
- 2) What extra note does G7 chord have compared to the G chord?
- 3) What does the open string play on the G chord?
- 4) What do the open strings play on the F chord?
- 5) What is the I-IV-V chord progression for the key of F?

Below are chords for all five common major scales: C, D, F, G and A, along with suggested fingering. From <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/ukulele-for-dummies-cheat-sheet-uk-edition.html>. Note that the 2nd, 3rd and 6th chords are minor chords. An explanation of how these chords are derived for the C major scale is in Appendix B. The important aspect is to focus on the I, IV, V progression for each scale. If you learn these basic I, IV, V chords you can strum thousands of songs.

I

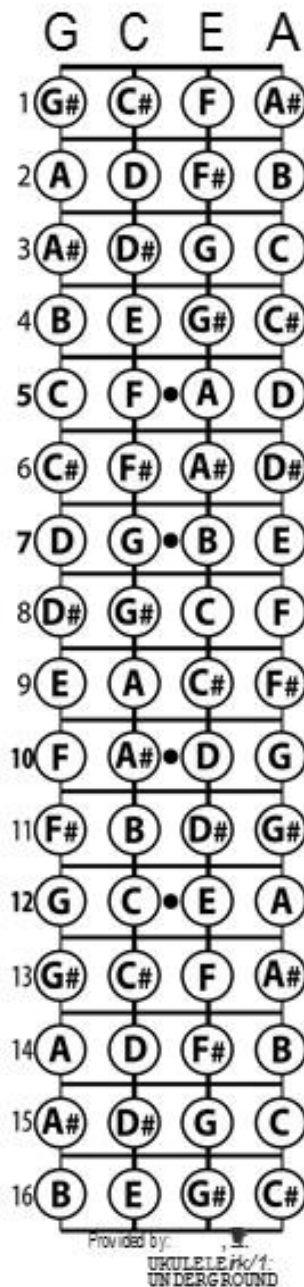
IV V

C 3	Dm 2 3 1	Em 3 2 1	F 2 1	G7 2 1 3	Am 2
D 1 2 3	Em 3 2 1	F#m 2 1 3	G 1 3 2	A7 1	Bm 3 1 1 1
F 2 1	Gm 2 3 1	Am 2	Bb 3 2 1 1	C7 1	Dm 2 3 1
G 1 3 2	Am 2	Bm 3 1 1 1	C 3	D7 1 1 1 2	Em 3 2 1
A 2 1	Bm 3 1 1 1	C#m 3 1 1 1	D 1 2 3	E7 1 2 3	F#m 2 1 3

SECTION 3: THE UKE FRET BOARD

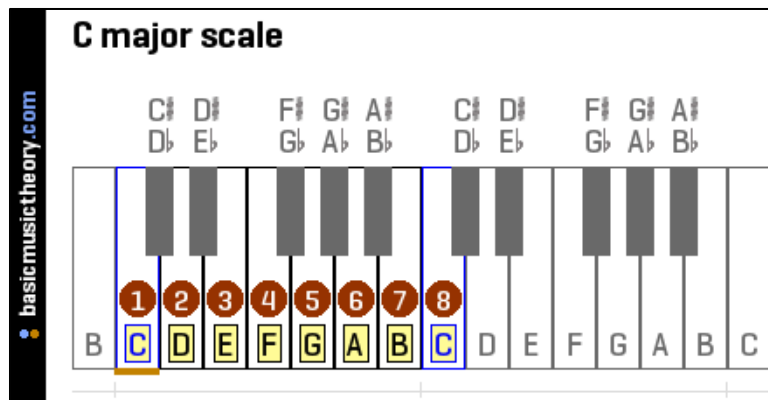
Don't Proceed Without It

The four chords shown above (C-D-F-G) are known to just about all beginning uke players, because they are so common. However, many players don't know the notes on the fretboard. If you want to go further in your understanding you need to know the notes on the fretboard. Or, at least, know how to figure them out. To be blunt, you won't understand your uke the way you should unless you know the fretboard. Here it is, diagram courtesy of Underground Ukulele:



How does this work? The “nut” of the uke is at the very top, just above the first fret. The 16th fret is at the bottom (one you will probably never play). If you place your finger to cover any letter in the location shown and press on the string, then pluck that string, you will get the note shown. Thus if you press the E string at the first fret, and pluck the E string, you will get an F. If you press the A string at the third fret, and pluck that string, you will get a C; etc. (Note: this fretboard figure uses #’s but could also have used b’s to indicate the same notes; thus G# could be labeled Ab; C# could be labeled Db; etc. See Appendix C for the fret board diagram with sharps labeled as flats.)

I recommend you memorize the notes for the first three frets at least, then learn how to figure out all the others. It’s really easy. Each successive fret is one piano key higher (including all the black keys). This is the same as saying one half-step higher. Let’s go back to the C major scale on the piano.



Confirm each of the following statements by reviewing both the C major piano scale and the fretboard diagram, then with your tuner.

- C to C# is one half step. You get C# (or Db) when you press the 1st fret of C string.
- C# to D is one half step. You get D when you press the 2nd fret of C string.
- D to D# is one half step. You get D# (or Eb) when you press the 3rd fret of C string.
- D# to E is one half step. You get E when you press the 4th fret of C string.
- E to F is one half step. You get F when you press the 5th fret of C string.

Whoa! Why not E to E#? If you look at the piano, you’ll see there are no black keys between E and F, and between B and C. The reason is beyond this syllabus, but is a fact you should memorize. Think BE. After B and after E there is no black key. The next key after B and E is not a sharp or flat; it is C after B, and F after E.

Thus, when you have a B on the fretboard, the next note up on the same string will be C, which is one-half step higher than B.

When you have an E on the fretboard, the next note up on the same string will be F, which is one-half step higher than E.

This type of exercise can be replicated on any string. Here are the first five notes of the A string. Confirm these statements with the above diagram (piano keyboard *and* the uke fretboard), and with your tuner.

A to A# is one half step. You get A# (or B \flat) when you press the 1st fret of A string.

A# to B is one half step. You get B when you press the 2nd fret of A string.

B to C is one half step. You get C when you press the 3rd fret of A string.

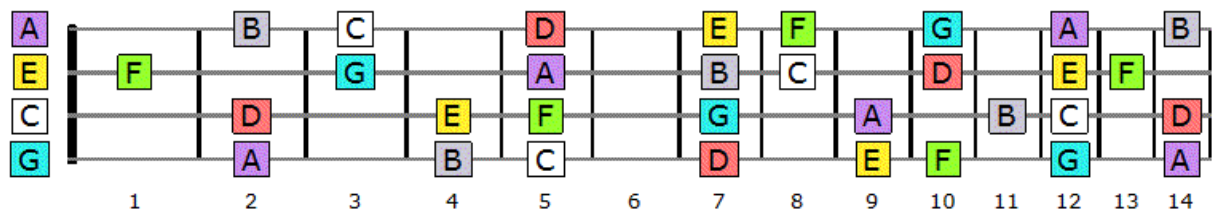
C to C# is one half step. You get C# (or D \flat) when you press the 4th fret of A string.

C# to D is one half step. You get D when you press the 5th fret of A string.

Do this exercise for each of the strings, and check the results with your tuner. That way you'll become familiar with the first five frets, where most songs are played (certainly by beginners).

After you feel comfortable with the first five frets, practice playing the C Major scale on your uke: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C. A glance at the fretboard shows many ways of doing this. The simplest method is to use a combination of open strings and fretted strings to play the notes. The figure below is similar to the fretboard diagram from Ukulele Underground, but is horizontal instead of vertical, and only goes to 12 frets instead of 15. Only notes in the C Major scale are labeled (from <http://www.ezfolk.com/uke/Tutorials/major-scales/major-scales.html>).

C Major



Playing the C Major Scale on Your Fret Board

C – open C string

D – 2nd fret, C string

E – open E string

F – 1st fret, E string

G – 3rd fret, E string

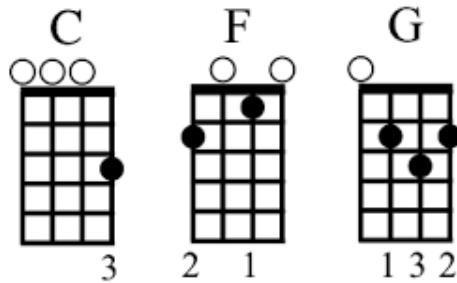
A – open A string

B – 2nd fret, A string

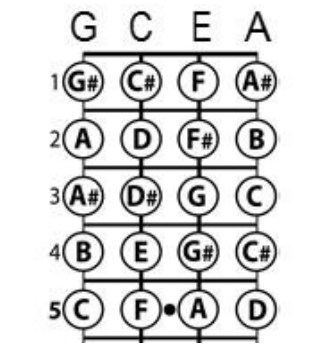
C (one octave higher than middle C) – 3rd fret, A string

Let's look again at the I-IV-V chords of the C Major scale: C, F and G.

Musical Key	I-IV-V Chords
C	C = C-E-G F = F-A-C G = G-B-D



Below are the first 5 frets of the fretboard, to correspond to the chord diagrams above.



Now it should be easy to see how these chords are created by the finger patterns.

- Strumming the C chord will give G (open string), C (open string), E (open string), and C (A string, third fret pressed): G-C-E-C = C chord.
- Strumming the F chord will give A (G string, 2nd fret pressed), C (open string), F (E string, 1st fret pressed), and A (open string): A-C-F-A = F chord.
- Strumming the G chord will give G (open string), D (C string, 2nd fret pressed), G (E string, 3rd fret pressed), and B (A string, 2nd fret pressed): G-D-G-B = G chord.

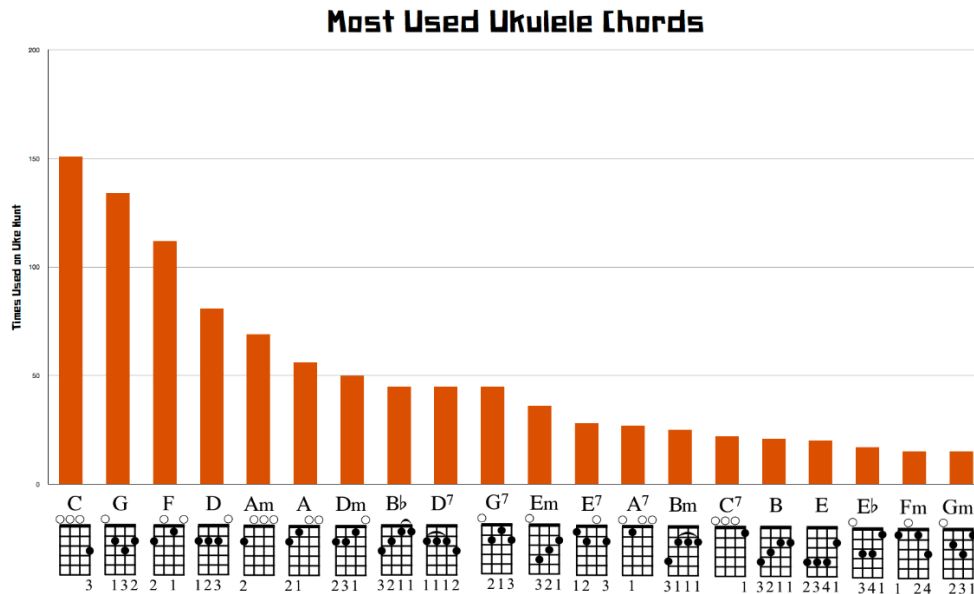
QUIZ TIME – SECTION 3 – The Uke Fret Board

- 1) Pressing the C string at the 4th fret will give what note?
- 2) How many strings in the F chord play the F note?
- 3) Considering just the first 12 frets, how many ways are there to play the C note on the ukulele?
- 4) Considering just the first 12 frets, how many ways are there to play an F note?
- 5) What is the V chord of the C major scale?

SECTION 4: COMMON CHORDS AND CHORD SUBSTITUTIONS

Chord Substitution

The next chart, from Ukulele Hunt, shows the 20 most played uke chords in all the songs listed on their web site. I recommend you learn as many as you can. Some may be too difficult to play initially (particularly E and Bm), but again, there are substitutions you can use.



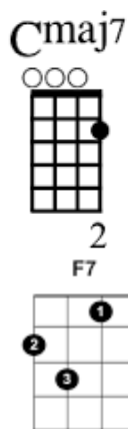
Theoretically there are hundreds of possible chords, when you include the same chord played several different ways. The following web site has a look up program for over 700 chords. <http://www.ukuleletricks.com/ukulele-chords/>. It's fun to scroll through them. Just look at the different ways there are to play C major. Despite this plethora of uke chords, if you learn the above 20, with perhaps a few more added in, you will be able to play virtually any song you come across. Appendix D shows a table of recommended chords from 6 different web sites.

In the key examples discussed so far, C and G, I've shown the I-IV-V chord progressions. Turns out that each chord in the progression can be substituted by one or more *other* chords. The reason is their similarity: the substitutions usually sound just as good as the original chords. And an added bonus is that they are often easier to play.

Below is a table of some common keys used for uke songs, the basic I-IV-V chord progression for each, and chords that can be substituted. In several instances the substitute chord is more popular than the basic chord of the I-IV-V progression. (This is by no means a complete list of chords that can substitute.)

Musical Key	I-IV-V Chords	Chords that can substitute
C	C = C-E-G F = F-A-C G = G-B-D	CM7, C7 F7 G7
D	D = D-F#-A G = G-B-D A = A-C#-E	D7 G7 Am, A7
F	F = F-A-C A = A-C#-E C = C-E-G	F7 Am, A7 CM7, C7
G	G = G-B-D C = C-E-G D = D-F#-A	G7 CM7, C7 D7
A	A = A-C#-E D = D-F#-A E = G-B-D	Am, A7 D7 E7

You may note that two of the chord substitutions are not among the twenty most popular: CM7 and F7. However, these two are easy to form. CM7 (or Cmaj7) is simply the 2nd finger on the 2nd fret of the A string. F7 is the same as F, with the addition of the middle finger on the third fret of the C string.



QUIZ TIME – SECTION 4 – Chord Substitution

- 1) Substituting F7 for F gives what notes for the chord?
- 2) To go from F to Am, what string would you un-fret?
- 3) List the chords in the substitution column that require only a single finger for fretting.
- 4) To go from G to Em without lifting any fingers, what would you press?
- 5) Which of the 20 most common chords have all four strings fretted?

SECTION 5: LEAD AND SONG SHEETS, AND CHORDS


Actual Songs, and How They are Printed

In uke club sessions, the music played will show up in one of two ways (by “show up,” I mean it will either be in a song book on paper, in a downloaded computer program on an iPad or computer, or projected on the wall for all to see).

- 1) **Standard musical notation** shows the actual notes, measures, etc. (A measure, or bar, is the section between two vertical lines). The chords appear above the measures. This is called a “lead sheet.” Standard musical notation for uke shows the treble clef, the key signature, and the time signature – everything the musician needs to play the piece. This version of Clementine is an example of standard musical notation.

Oh My Darling Clementine USA trad.

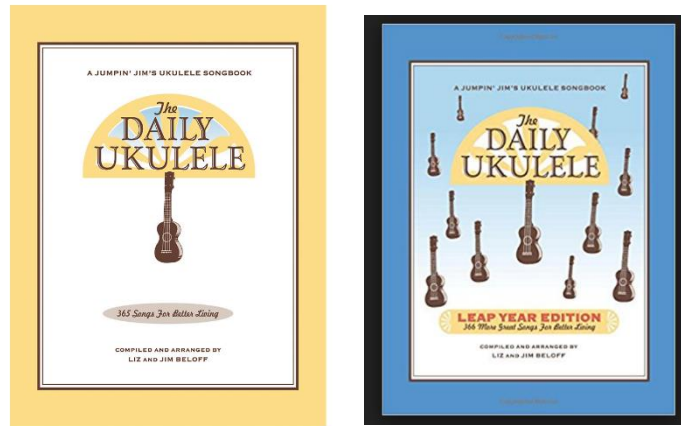
In a ca-vern, in a can-yon, ex-ca-va-ting for a mine, dwelt a mi-ner, for-ty
ni-ner, and his daugh-ter Clemen-tine. Oh my dar-ling, oh my dar-ling, oh my
dar-ling Clemen-tine! You are lost and gone for-e-ver. Dreadful sor-ry, Clemen-tine.

The  indicates the treble clef. In a piano, the treble clef shows the notes for the right hand. (Notes for the left hand are written on the bass clef). The key here is F, because there is one B \flat in the key signature, shown as a \flat on the third line of the treble clef. These lines, from bottom to top, are E G B D F, often memorized as “Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge.” So \flat on the third line means all B’s are flatted, and that this is the key of F. The fact that the piece begins and ends with the F chord also signifies it is in the key of F. The $\frac{3}{4}$ after the \flat is the time signature, and means there are three beats per measure, with each quarter note getting one beat.

You don’t have to read music to play uke using standard musical notation. You just change chords on the words, as shown; you can ignore all the notes.

One advantage of standard musical notation is that it puts all players ‘on the same page’. The other way music is commonly displayed, so called song sheets, are not standardized, and are often modified to meet the needs of the group. Sometimes

they are modified more than once, so that different players have the song in different keys! This is less likely to happen with standard musical notation. Some groups use the popular Beloff *Daily Ukulele* books, which together have over 700 uke songs in standard musical notation (i.e., as lead sheets). With standard books, everyone is literally on the same page.



- 2) When the melody line is shown with letters for the chords displayed above, the term used is “lead sheet.” Clementine music shown on the previous page is thus shown as a lead sheet. When only the lyrics and letters for chords are shown, the term used is “song sheet”; see song sheet for Clementine, below. Song sheets are not standardized, and in fact are often modified to suit the needs of each particular group. Most uke groups I have attended (about 10 different ones, and counting) have favored song sheets, because they are less intimidating than lead sheets, and because singers and experienced players can modify them to suit their own special talents. In this section of a Clementine song sheet, the chords are shown before the words (further down I will show song sheets with chords over the words).

Oh My Darling Clementine from www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

Oh My Darling Clementine

[C] In a cavern, in a canyon,
Excavating for a [G7] mine
Dwelt a miner, forty [C] niner
And his [G7] daughter, Clemen[C]tine

Chorus

Oh my [C] darling, oh my darling
Oh my darling, Clemen[G7]tine
Thou art lost and gone [C] forever
Dreadful [G7] sorry, Clemen[C]tine

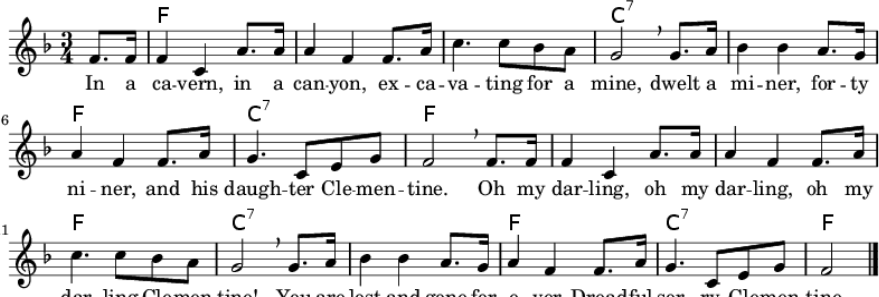
[C]Light she was and like a fairy
And her shoes were number [G7] nine
Herring boxes without [C] toppers
Sandals [G7] were for Clemen[C]tine

Chord Progressions in both types of song sheets

Let's look at a few songs and their chord progressions, using both standard musical notation and song sheets. Shown below once again is Clementine in the key of F, using standard musical notation (a lead sheet). Only two of the chords in the I-IV-V progression are in this example, F and C7.

- I-IV-V Chord progression for Key of F: F-Bb-C
- Chords in this version of Clementine: F and C7.

Oh My Darling Clementine USA trad.



In a ca-vern, in a can-yon, ex-ca-va-ting for a mine, dwelt a mi-ner, for-ty
ni-ner, and his daugh-ter Clemen-tine. Oh my dar-ling, oh my dar-ling, oh my
dar-ling Clemen-tine! You are lost and gone for-e-ver. Dreadful sor-ry, Clemen-tine.

Here is Clementine in the key of C, using a song sheet.

- I-IV-V Chord progression for Key of C: C-F-G
- Chords in this version of Clementine: C and G7.

Verse 1

C
In the cavern, in a canyon,
G7
Excavating for a mine,
C
Dwelt a miner, forty-niner,
G7 **C**
And his daughter, Clemen-tine.

Chorus 1

C
Oh my darling, oh my darling,
G7
Oh my darling Clemen-tine.
C
You are lost and gone for-ever,
G7 **C**
Dreadful sorry, Clemen-tine.

Verse 2

C
Light she was, and like a fairy,
G7
And her shoes were number nine.
C
Herring boxes without topses,
G7 **C**
Sandals were for Clemen-tine.

And here is Clementine in the key of D, again with just two of the chords from the typical 3-chord progression.

- I-IV-V Chord progression for D: D-G-A
- Chords in this version of Clementine: D and A7.

OH, MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

Words and Music by
PERCY MONTROSE

Slowly $\text{♩} = 88$

Verse:

D A7

1. In a cav-ern, in a can-yon, Ex-ca-vat-ing for a mine Dwelt a
(2.) was and like a fair-y, And her shoes were num-ber nine, Her-ring
(3.) duck-lings to the wa-ter Ev-'ry morn-ing just at nine, Stubbed her
4.-7. See additional lyrics

D A7 D

min-er for-ty nin-er, And his daugh-ter Clem-en-tine.
box-es, with-out tops-es, San-dals were for Clem-en-tine. } Oh my
toe a-against a splin-ter, Fell in-to the foam-ing brine.

As you can see, simple songs can use only two of the three chords in a I-IV-V chord progression. Now let's look at some songs with all three chords of a I-IV-V chord progression.

Here is a song sheet for *Five Foot Two*, showing words and chords only. It is in the key of C.

- I-IV-V Chord progression for C: C-F-G
- Chords in this version of *Five Foot Two*: C, E7, A7, D7, G7

Five Foot Two

C E7 A7 D7 G7
4/4 Sn - E

INTRO: D7//// G7//// C//// G7////

C E7
Five foot two, eyes of blue, but,
A7
Oh, what those five feet could do!
D7 G7 C//// G7////
Has **anybody seen my girl?**
C E7
Turned-up nose, turned down hose,
A7
Flapper, yes sir, one of those!
D7 G7 C
Has anybody seen my girl?

C E7
Now if you run into a five-foot-two,
A7
Covered with furs,
D7
Diamond rings and all those things,
G7 (tacit)
Bet your life it isn't her!
C E7
But could she love, could she woo,
A7
Could she, could she, could she coo?
D7 G7 C
Has anybody seen my girl?

Here is *This Land* in the key of G.

- I-IV-V Chord progression for G: G-C-D
- Chords in this version of *This Land*: G, C, D7

G C G
This land is your land this land is my land
D7 G
From California to the New York Island
C G
From the Redwood Forests to the Gulf Stream waters
D7 G
This land was made for you and me

C G
As I was walking that ribbon of highway
D7 G
I saw above me an endless skyway
C G
I saw below me a Golden Valley
D7 G
This land was made for you and me

Repeat #1

C G
I roamed and rambled and followed my footsteps
D7 G
Through the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
C G
And all around me a voice was sounding
D7 G
This land was made for you and me

QUIZ TIME – SECTION 5 – Song Sheets and Chords

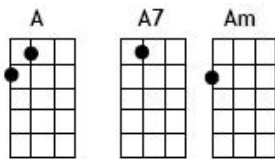
- 1) What is the I-IV-V chord progression for key of D?
- 2) What is the I-IV-V chord progression for key of G?
- 3) True or False: In standard music notation, a new chord starts on each measure.
- 4) If all you have is a song sheet (words and chords), how can you tell what key a piece of music is in?
- 5) In standard sheet music, what does $\frac{3}{4}$ mean on the treble clef?

SECTION 6: CHORD VEXATION AND MOVABLE CHORDS

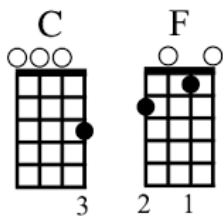
Changing chords, while keeping the rhythm, bedevils all beginning uke players. Apart from insufficient practice, there are two main reasons for this situation: 1) Physical limitation and 2) Uncommon Chords.

Physical Limitation

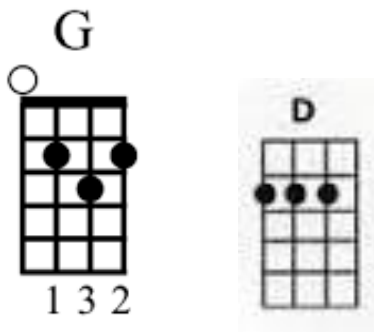
One and two fret chords are easy for everyone, such as



and

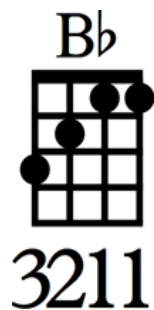


Three-fret chords (meaning chords where fingers have to press strings in 3 different locations) are more difficult, but if the fingers are close together, it's not a big problem. On the 20 most popular chords 9 are 3-fret; of the 5 most popular, two are 3-fret, the G and the D.



Four-fret chords – meaning the strings are pressed in four different places - are generally more difficult, especially when they call for using one finger on two or more frets – so called barre chords. Barre chords are very difficult for some people.

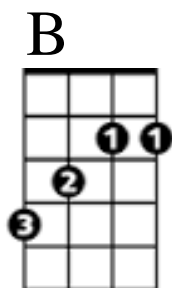
Four-fret chords are special because they are *closed chords*. In closed chords, all the strings are fretted, i.e., there are no open strings. They are also called ‘movable chords’, because you can move them up or down the fret board to get a different chord. Thus, once you master the fingering for one of these 4-fret closed chords, you have mastered the fingering for others as well. The most common four-fret chord is B \flat .



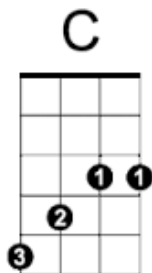
To play B \flat you either bar the first two strings with the first finger (as shown here), or you could use the first and second fingers for the A and E strings, first fret; then you would use finger 3 for the 2nd fret at C string, and finger 4 for the 3rd fret at G string.

For most beginners, learning this chord well enough to play in a song is difficult initially. However, this chord shape is **IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS MOVABLE; YOU CAN USE IT TO PLAY OTHER CHORDS.**

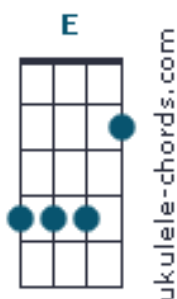
Once you get this chord shape down, you can move it up the fret board one-half step to play the B chord.



Move the fingers another half step up and you have C chord.



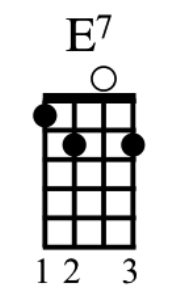
Another half step with this same fingering, you get C#, and so on. This same shape at the 7th fret will play E, which may be easier for some people than the more common way of playing E, which is a stretch and bedevils most beginners, as shown here.



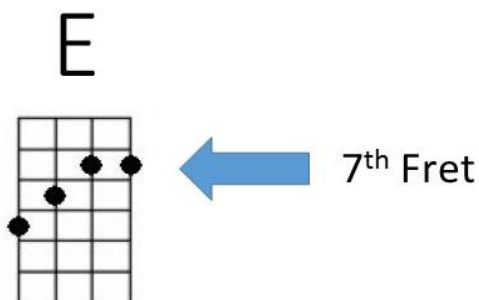
Below is a photo of an expert playing E. He is barring the G, C and E of the fourth fret, and pressing the A string at the second fret. Most beginners can't do that! They either end up pressing the A string at the fourth fret with their barre finger, or cannot make the stretch at all.



Now if you are in the key of A, you can substitute E7 for E.



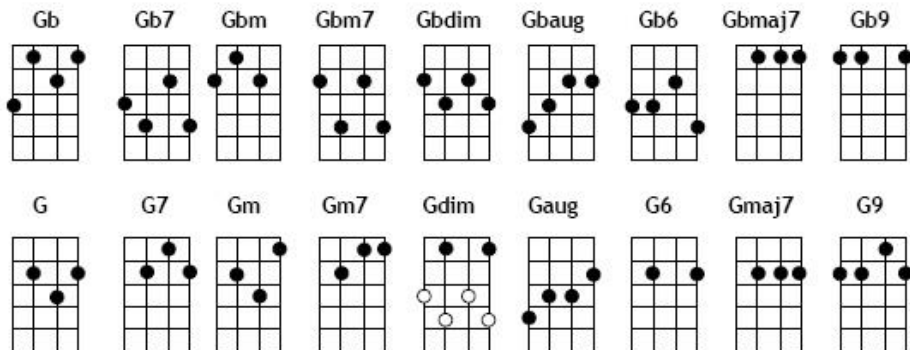
However, in other keys E7 won't sound good as a substitute for E. In that case, if you're adept at the Bb fingering, you could move that fingering to the 7th fret and play the E note.



When physically challenging chords appear, it is best to play a reasonable alternative, or simply skip over them.

Uncommon chords

There are well over a thousand possible chords for the uke. Very experienced players may know a hundred or more. The beginner is happy to learn a dozen or so. Single page chord charts carried by many players can appear very intimidating. Let's say you know G and G7, two of the 20 most popular chords listed by Ukulele Hunt. But look what's shown on this one chord chart for the letter G: G, G7, Gbm, Gbm7, etc., etc., all the way to G9. Eighteen "G" chords alone! Do you have to learn those too? Of course not, and probably very few uke players know even half of them.



In every uke session you're likely to encounter chords you've never played. Here is the song sheet for *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter*, in the key of G.

I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter - G

G G6 Gmaj7 B7 C E7 Am Am7 D7 Edim
4/4 SN - D

G G6 Gmaj7

I'm gonna sit right down and write my - self a letter,

G B7 C E7 Am

And make believe it came from you.

Am7 Am

I'm gonna write words, oh, so sweet,

G E7

They're gonna knock me off my feet,

A7

A lot of kisses on the bottom,

D7

I'll be glad I got 'em.

G G6 Gmaj7

I'm gonna smile and say "I hope you're feeling better"

G B7 C E7 Am

And close "with love" the way you do.

C Edim G E7

I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter

A7 Am D7 G

And make believe it came from you.

REPEAT SONG. 2nd ending:

A7 Am

And make believe it came

A7 Am

And make believe it came

A7 Am D7 G

And make believe it came from you.

You could know all the common chords, consider yourself a pretty good player, and still be unfamiliar with Gmaj7, B7, G6 and Edim. Or, you might actually know them, but not so well that you can make the quick chord transition. This happens all the time – uncommon chords crop up. When that happens, you should either keep playing the previous chord, or play something similar to the ones listed (e.g., G for Gmaj7 and G6). No one knows all the chords, and this substitution is not a big deal when playing with a group.

QUIZ TIME – SECTION 6 – Chord Vexation and Movable Chords

- 1) What is a movable chord?
- 2) E7 can be substituted for E in what key?
- 3) Bb chord fingering played at the 3rd fret would give what chord?
- 4) To play E using the chord shape for Bb, what fret you move the fingering to?
- 5) When finger presses two or more strings at the same time, it is called what?

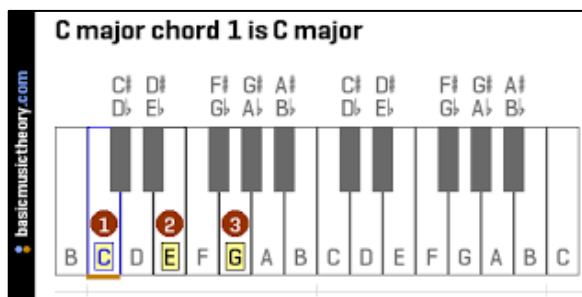
SECTION 7. CHORD TRICKS

The more experienced you become as a uke player, the more ‘tricks’ you learn about how to play different chords. By tricks, I mean shortcuts, different fingerings, chord substitutions and the like. The following are a few that beginners may consider. In the uke chord diagrams, the numbers refer to fingers of your fretting hand, with “1” being the index finger, “2” the middle finger, “3” the ring finger and “4” the pinkie.

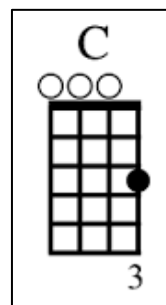


A different (but tonally similar) chord as substitute

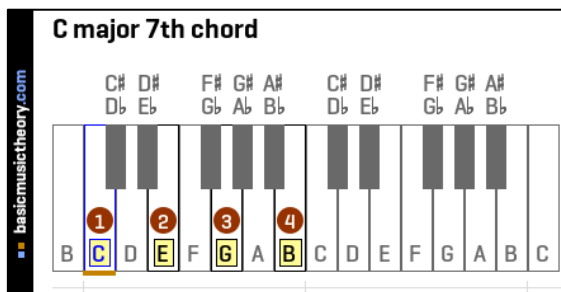
As shown in Clementine in Section 5 (version in key of F), Cmaj7 and C7 (C dominant 7th chord) can sometimes substitute for the C major chord since they are tonally similar. This does not work in all keys, but does work if the C is a I, IV or V in the chord progression. Cmaj7 has an added B and C7 has an added B \flat .



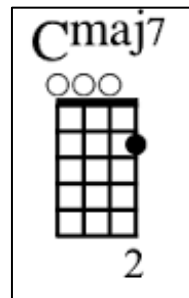
Piano Notes: C-E-G



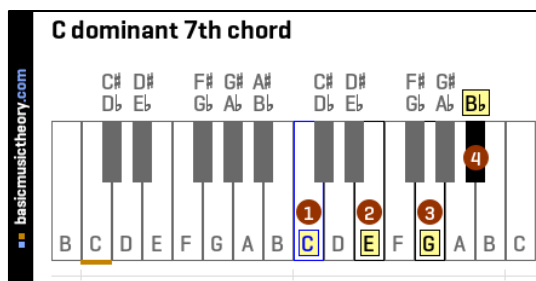
Uke Notes: G-C-E-C



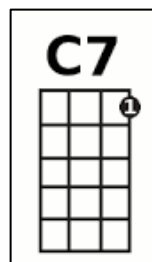
Piano notes: C-E-G-B



Uke notes: G-C-E-B



Piano notes: C-E-G-B \flat

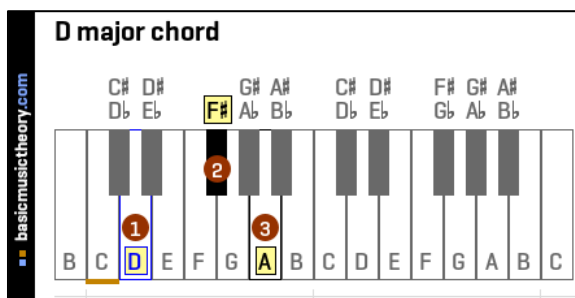


Uke notes: G-C-E-B \flat

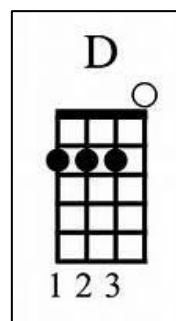
There is no great advantage here, except to ‘mix things up a bit’ when playing the C in certain scales. There is more of an advantage when the substituted chord is simpler to play.

D7 for D

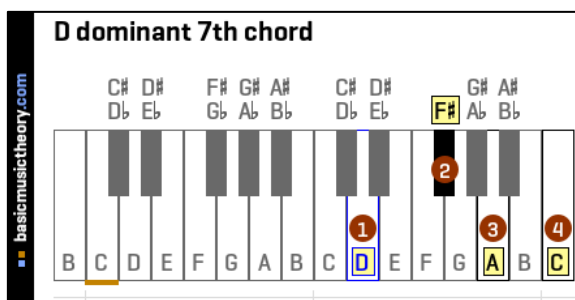
D7 can substitute for D in many songs, since it is tonally similar. Below are D and D7 on the keyboard and the uke fret board.



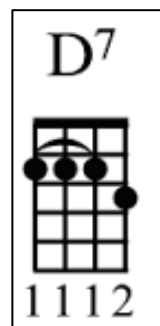
Piano notes: D-F \sharp -A



Uke notes: A-D-F \sharp -A



Piano notes: D-F \sharp -A-C

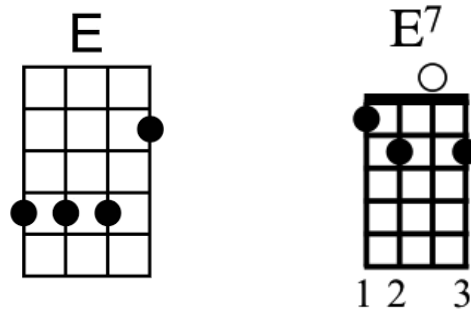


Uke notes: A-D-F \sharp -C

The only difference is that D7 adds a fourth note, C, to the D chord. Now you might ask, how is D7 easier to play than D? As shown above, it isn't. However, a substitute for D7 is easier to play than D. So when you see a D you can, in some circumstances, use D7 in an easier version that will be discussed shortly.

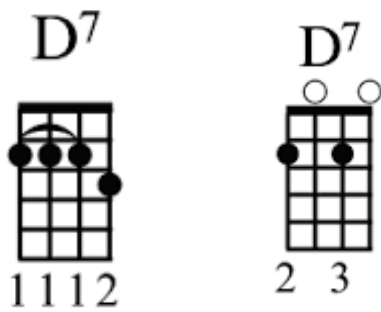
E7 for E

This next chord trick was discussed previously, and bears some repetition. It is difficult to play an E chord; you need to press the G, C and E strings of the 4th fret, plus the A string at the 2nd fret. If you are in the key of A, you can substitute E7 for E. You might get away with this substitution in other keys as well, but should first check to see if it sounds right.



Same chord name, different notes

This is not a common situation, and D7 is the only time you're likely to encounter it. The D7 chord is D-F#-A-C. There are two common finger patterns for this chord on the ukulele, both shown below. You'll find one or the other listed in books and chord charts.



The pattern on the right is obviously easier to play for most people. It is sometimes called the “Hawaiian D7.” When you play either chord, what notes are you strumming?

D7 on piano:

D-F#-A-C

D7 in left figure (same notes, different order):

A-D-F#-C

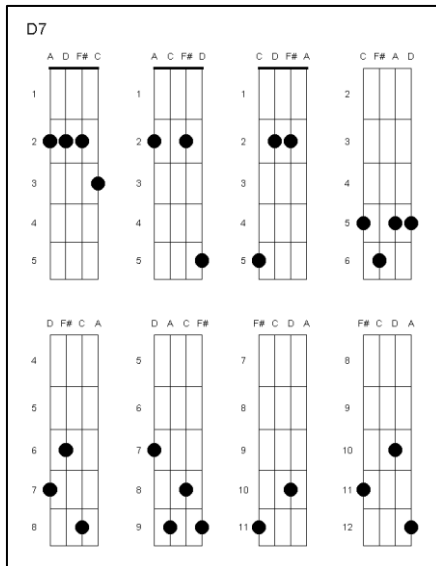
D7 in right figure:

A-C-F#-A

What's the difference? The simpler or “Hawaiian D7” leaves out the D note; it only plays 3 of the D7 notes. Is this permissible? Yes, in this particular instance; you get a similar tone as if all 4 notes of the D7 chord were played, so substitution is not only permissible, but encouraged if you have difficulty playing a specific chord. (In other instances, the so-called “dominant” or 7 chords will have the basic triad plus one other note. Anytime you see a letter followed by 7, such as C7, D7, or F7, and without any other qualifier (Maj, min, etc.), it is a dominant 7 chord.

Same exact chord, alternate fingering

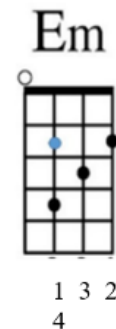
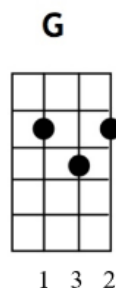
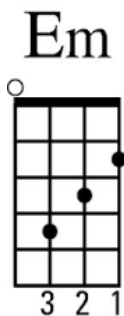
Any chord can be fingered numerous ways. This should be apparent just by examining the fret board. A professional uke player could play D7 eight different ways, as shown below. Note that the alternate fingerings of D7 involve moving higher up the fretboard, as high as the 12th fret in the last example.



Playing D7 high up the fret board is certainly not easier for the beginner or less experienced player. We want something easier, not more difficult. Below are two examples of playing a chord with different fingering than printed in chord charts, both of which should make things easier.

Example 1: Play E minor from G chord with one finger

When you see the chord progression G to E minor, you don't have to lift fingers to play the E minor. You're almost there when you play G! The far left figure shows traditional fingering for E min. If you're on the G chord, you can easily play E min just by adding your pinkie (finger #4) to the C string, fourth fret. This fingering works, of course, because pressing the fret up the keyboard overrides any fret on the same string down the key board. So your finger on 2nd fret of C (the blue dot) is canceled out once you press the 4th fret of the C string. With just your pinkie you've created the Em chord.



Example 2: Shift quickly between G and G7

These two chords are frequently adjacent to one another in songs, as in this song sheet for “Let Me Call You Sweetheart.”

Let Me Call You Sweetheart
C F D7 G7 G Gdim Fvar Cdim
3/4 SN - E

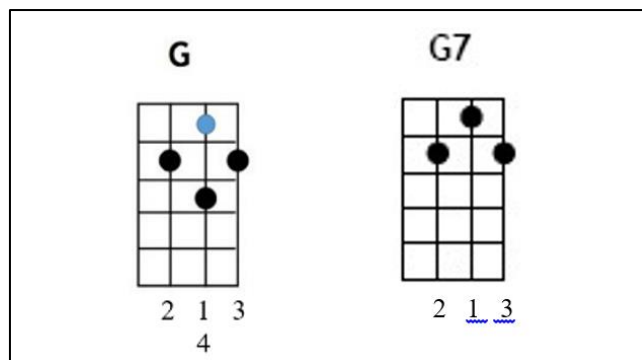
INTRO: A7/// D7/// G7/// C/// C///
C
Let me call you sweetheart
F D7
I'm in love with you.
G7 G
Let me hear you whisper
G7 C Gdim G7 G G7
That you love me, too.

With traditional fingering you have to lift three fingers to go from one G7 to G or from G to G7. But there's a much better way: a four-finger position that allows you to go back and forth with ease.

In the diagram below left, create G by placing your:

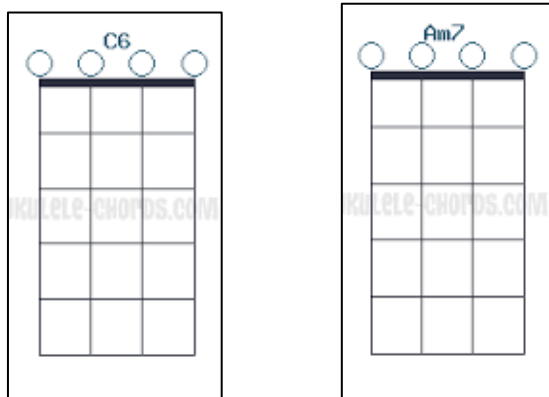
- middle finger on C string 2nd fret
- index finger on the E string 1st fret
- pinkie on the E string 3rd fret
- ring finger on A string 2nd fret.

With this position, just lift up your pinkie and you have G7. Put it back down and you have G.



Same exact fingering, different name

For ukuleles with standard tuning G-C-E-A, strumming open strings will play a chord with two names, C6 and Am7.

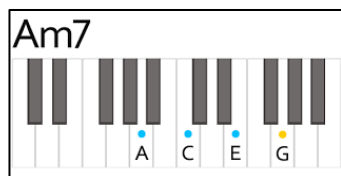


That's because G, C, E and A are notes of the C major scale (white keys on piano beginning on C: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C) *and* its relative minor, the A minor scale (white keys on piano beginning on A: A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A). Thus they have the same key signature, i.e., no sharps or flats. The chords C6 and Amin 7 have the *same notes* but in a different sequence on the piano keyboard.

C6 is C – E – G – A; this is the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 6th notes of the C major scale.



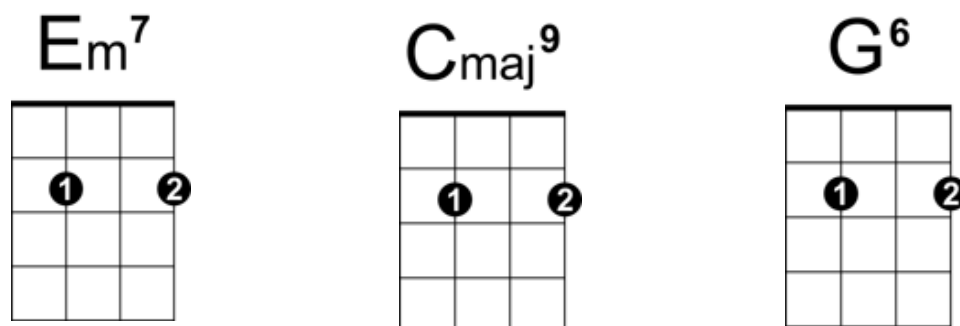
Am7 is A – C – E – G; this is the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th notes of the A minor scale.



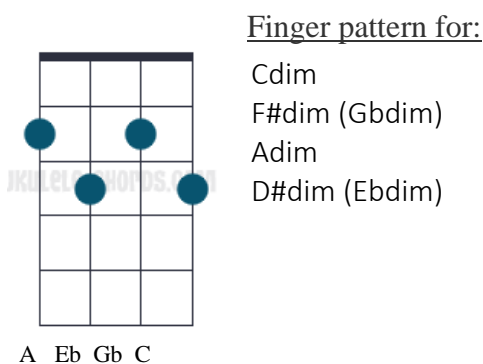
In musical terms, C6 is an inversion of Am7 and vice versa: same notes, different sequence. When you strum the ukulele, all the strings are “open” and you are strumming G-C-E-A. These are the four notes of *both* C6 and Am7.

There are many other examples of identical fingerings for different chords. For a list of chord equivalents, see <http://www.doctoruke.com/chordequivalents.pdf>.

Here is a fairly common chord pattern that can have one of *three* names. The notes strummed are G-D-E-B.



In Appendix E you'll find chord patterns that fit four or more names. Here is one example.



QUIZ TIME – SECTION 7 – Chord Tricks

- 1) What is the difference between regular D7 and the Hawaiian D7?
- 2) To change G to Em, what would you add?
- 3) To go from G to G7, without lifting fingers from either the A or C string, what should you do?
- 4) Name two substitutions for the C chord in the key of C Major.
- 5) Name a substitute chord for E in the key of A.

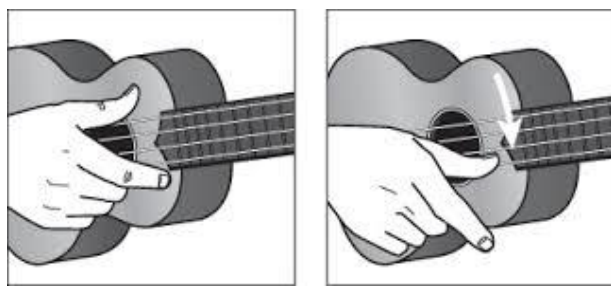
SECTION 8: STRUMMING

So far I've mentioned strumming only briefly, and not discussed any technique. Even beginners can do a basic downbeat strum in 3/4 or 4/4 time. To vary the strum and keep the rhythm takes skill and practice, and that's about it.

What finger to use? Most players prefer the index finger, but some beginners like to use the thumb. For the index finger, you strum down using the nail, and strum up using the fleshy part of the fingertip. There are many YouTube videos that demonstrate strumming for beginners. Examples include:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXkj8Qs1yAM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZIMCNJP1nE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAScCO3Mb-w>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad4MpwnZFdY>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_qBwSr2WbY&feature=iv&src_vid=puJsyHM1SwQ&annotation_id=annotation_636214

Where to strum? Answer: Whatever part of the fret board gives the best sound. Generally, for the soprano and concert ukes the best sound is where the neck hits the body. This figure is from Idiot's Guide website, <http://www.idiotsguides.com/arts-and-entertainment/other-instruments/how-to-strum-ukulele/>.



For tenor ukes the sweet spot for strumming is further toward the nut, around the 12th fret. However, you should experiment on your uke to find the location that sounds best.

The next strum-related topic in most web sites and books is strum patterns, and we'll get to those below. However, it is just as important, if not more so, to discuss the mechanics of an individual strum. For this instruction I recommend a superb 12-minute video by master uke player James Hill,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRFPci9rZrQ>.



James Hill

Hill breaks down the strum into four essential components:

1. Posture – shape of your hand while strumming
2. Path – the path your hand takes as it goes past the strings
3. Position – where your hand ends up making contacts with the strings
4. Pressure – how much force is behind the strum

More words won't do on the subject of strum mechanics. Watch the James Hill video.

Now we'll go to strum patterns. The web site by uke professional Brett McQueen has an excellent summary and demonstration of five basic strum patterns, shown below. Figures from <http://www.ukuleletricks.com/5-effective-strumming-patterns-for-beginners/>.



Brett McQueen

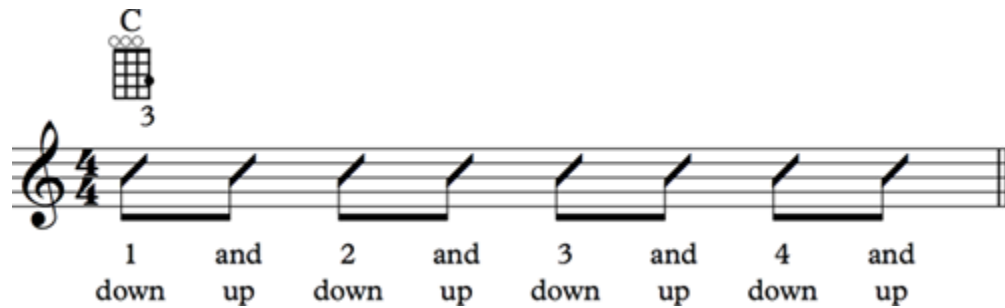
Strumming Pattern #1

This is your basic strumming pattern, the first one beginners learn, and that many players use during jam sessions. It is a simple d-d-d-d in 4/4 time (in 3/4 time it would be 3 down strums per measure of music). McQueen recommends playing the C chord when you practice strumming.



Strumming Pattern #2

This is perhaps the second commonest strumming pattern: down-up, down-up, down-up, down-up. Note that each down-up occupies the same amount of time as each down strum in Pattern #1.



Let's look at these two strumming patterns with sheet music. Below are four measures of the simple song Hot Cross Buns, in the key of G. Chords are alternating D and G and the song is in 4/4 time, which means four beats to the measure. Below the music are the two strum patterns shown so far. (Note that the wider spacing between the down strums in measure 3 does not mean longer times between strums; measure 3 contains 8th notes, so two 8th notes are played over the same time interval as one quarter note. In other words, the strumming pattern for measure 3 is exactly the same rhythm as for the other measures.)

Hot Cross Buns

Moderately Traditional

Hot cross buns, Hot cross buns, One a pen - ny, Two a pen - ny, Hot cross buns.

1st d d d d d d d d d d d d d d d

2nd d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u

Using Strumming Pattern #1, you would strum the song as follows:

1st measure, 4 down strums

G chord; down strum

D chord; down strum

G chord; down strum, down strum

2nd measure, 4 down strums

Still on G chord; down strum

D chord; down strum

G chord; down strum, down strum

3rd measure, 4 down strums

Still on G chord; down strum, down strum

D chord; down strum, down strum

4th measure, 4 down strums

G chord; down strum

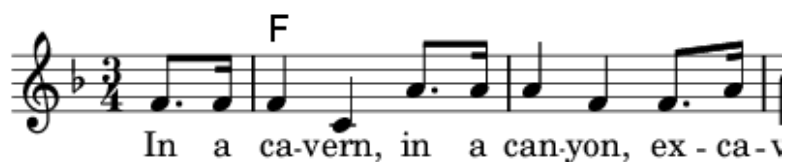
D chord; down strum

G chord; down strum, down strum

Using Strumming Pattern #2, every down strum becomes a down-up strum. In the first pattern, your strumming finger hits the strings 4 times per measure. In the second pattern, your strumming finger hits the strings 8 times per measure.

It works the same for 3/4 time. Below are the first two complete measures of Clementine in the key of F, as shown earlier. The strumming for this song begins on the F chord. Since the song is in 3/4 time, you have three beats per measure (space between the vertical lines). Each beat can have one or two strums.

Oh My Darling Clementine

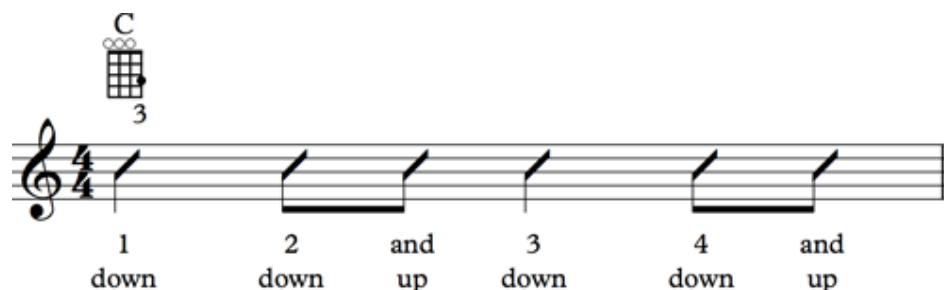


Down only	d d d d d d
Down-up	d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u d-u

Now let's finish with Ukulele Tricks' three other common strumming patterns. These should be practiced *after* you've become comfortable with the basic down-down and down-up patterns.

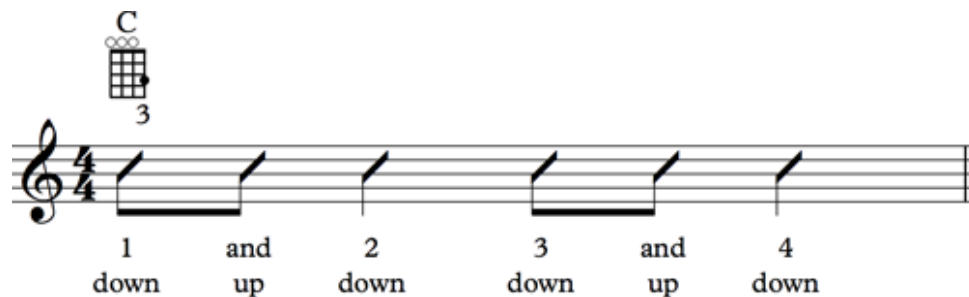
Strumming Pattern #3

This is a combination of the first two patterns. Down, then down-up, then down, then down-up. So it is 6 brushes of the strings per measure.



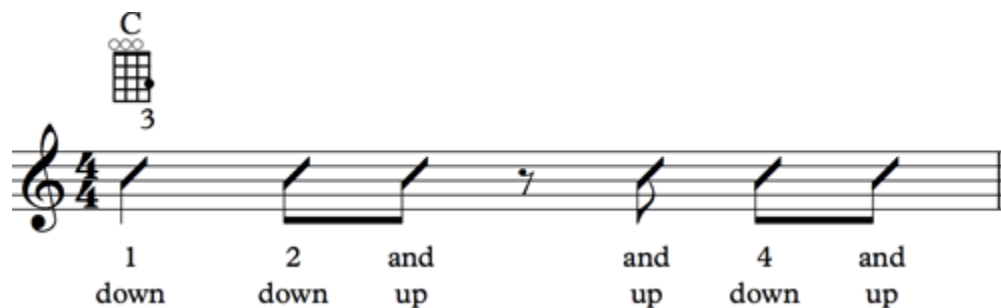
Strumming Pattern #4

This is a rearrangement of the pattern in #3; still 6 brushes of the strings per measure, but here it is down-up, then down, then down-up, then down.



Strumming Pattern #5

This particular pattern is known as the calypso strumming pattern, and is used in 4/4 time songs.



Calypso strumming is popular in many songs, such as *Yellowbird*, *The Sloop John B*, *Jamaica Farewell*, *Day-O*, *Maryanne*, *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*, and others. In the Mike Lynch video on calypso strumming, which I recommend, he states to practice this “many, many times,” with the C chord, just strumming until you develop muscle memory. See him play at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWYm4u1YcR4>

Strumming from song sheets

It is easy to visualize the strumming patterns when there is musical notation but, as stated earlier, most uke groups use song sheets which have only the words and chords. With song sheets you don't really know where one measure ends and the next one begins. As a general rule, you should follow the singer(s) or the bass player for the rhythm, changing chords when indicated from the lyrics. Below is the chorus of *This Land Is Your Land* in 4/4 time, with chord changes shown but no indication of where the beats are (is it three beats between G and C on the first line? Four? Not known). If you play often enough, you will know if you are in rhythm with the singer(s) and other players.

G C G
This land is your land this land is my land

D7 G
From California to the New York Island

C G
From the Redwood Forests to the Gulf Stream waters

D7 G
This land was made for you and me

While the specific technique is important (and I recommend you watch the James Hill video), strumming is basically about rhythm, and can make or break the music. Like anything else with the instrument, it requires practice. Here are a few important points for beginners.

- 1) Which finger or fingers to use is up to you. It could be your thumb, but most experienced players seem to prefer the index finger. Experiment until you feel comfortable with how you want to strum.
- 2) Contrary to what you may hear, you certainly can use a pick for strumming. It should be a soft felt pick, not a hard plastic pick that is used for guitars. I recommend you learn how to strum with your fingers, but there's nothing wrong with using a soft pick if you feel comfortable with that.
- 3) When playing in a group, if you lose your place during a chord change, keep strumming. It is more important to keep the rhythm than to worry about a chord change. This point cannot be overemphasized. KEEP STRUMMING, KEEP THE RHYTHM. What chord should you strum when you are lost? Whatever basic chord the key is in. If it's in the key of C, and you fumbled trying to get to an F7, just strum in C until you get back on track.
- 4) Rather than trying to learn multiple strum patterns initially, better to pick the first two discussed above and concentrate on those. Once you are comfortable with those, I would work on the Calypso strum next.

QUIZ TIME – SECTION 8 - Strumming

- 1) What should you do if you can't find a chord while playing in a group?
- 2) In a single measure of music that is in 4/4 time, playing a d-u strum pattern, how many times will your strumming finger cross the fret board?
- 3) In a single measure of music that is 3/4 time, playing d-u strum pattern, how many times will your strumming finger cross the fret board?
- 4) Calypso strum is used in what time signature?
- 5) If you use a pick for strumming, what type should it be?

SECTION 9: PLAYING MELODY ON THE UKULELE

Melody vs. Harmony

All popular music is made up of melody and harmony. Harmony is what we play when we strum the chords. Melody is the sequence of notes as played on the treble clef in standard music notation. However, in most uke jam sessions standard music notation is not used; instead, people play from song sheets (words and chords only). In these sessions melody is typically carried by the singer or singers.

Melody is what makes tunes tuneful. It's why we like to sing *You Are My Sunshine*, *Clementine* or *This Land Is Your Land*. We like the melodies. The chords that accompany these songs provide the harmony and make them more interesting. As discussed in Section 1, the I-IV-V chord progression is used as harmony for many popular songs.

Playing melody on the ukulele

The uke is among those instruments that can play harmony (chords) *and* melody. However, the melody, to some extent, is incorporated into the chords. *Every chord has a melody note*. Thus in *Clementine* the F chord has the F melody note, the C7 chord has the G melody note.

Oh My Darling Clementine USA trad.

The image shows the first three lines of musical notation for the song 'Oh My Darling Clementine'. The notation is in 3/4 time and F major. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Chords are indicated by letters F and C7 above the staff. The lyrics are written below the staff.

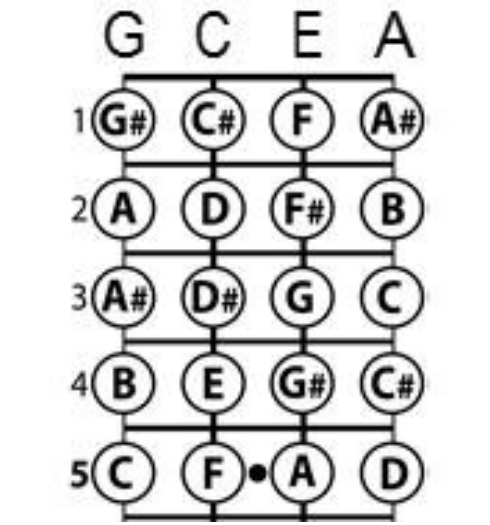
In a ca-vern, in a can-yon, ex-ca-va-ting for a mine, dwelt a mi-ner, for-ty
ni-ner, and his daugh-ter Clemen-tine. Oh my dar-ling, oh my dar-ling, oh my
dar-ling Clemen-tine! You are lost and gone for-e-ver. Dreadful sor-ry, Clemen-tine.

When you strum F and C7 to the rhythm of the song, you don't really hear the melody, because it's only two chords going back and forth. However, when there are more chords in a song, the melody often stands out, as for example with *The City of New Orleans*. Play these chords from just the first four lines and you will notice the melody coming through.

City of New Orleans Key C

C G C
 Riding on the City of New Orleans
 Am F C G
 Illinois Central, Monday morning rail
 C G C
 Fifteen cars and fifteen restless riders
 Am G C
 Three conductors, twenty five sacks of mail

While the chords incorporate notes from the melody, to play the actual melody line of any song you have to pluck or pick the melody notes on the treble clef. Below is a diagram of the first 5 frets of the uke, tuned to G-C-E-A (notes played by the open strings). If you press the E string at the first fret and pluck that string you get an F; press G string at the 2nd fret, you get an A; press the A string at the third fret you get a C; etc.



In just these first five frets there are 24 possible notes you can play (counting the four open strings). The lowest note would be open C string (= middle C on the piano). The highest note in these first five frets would be the D played by pressing A string, fifth fret, and plucking the A string. Try this out on your uke, using the tuner to check for each note. In fact, I recommend you not continue this Section until you have done this exercise. It's important that you become familiar with the notes on the fret board, particularly those played in the first five frets.

To play the first line of *Clementine* in the music shown above, you would just play the notes shown on the treble clef. The first line starts with three F's and finishes with a G, and includes 21 notes altogether. So to play the melody you would start like this:

F – 1st fret, E string
F – 1st fret, E string
F – 1st fret, E strong
C – open C string
A – open A string
A – open A string
A – open A string
F – 1st fret, E string
ETC.

In jam sessions it is rare to hear someone play melody on the uke. This is so for several reasons:

- Most players don't have the skill to play melody at the speed that songs are typically sung.
- The lowest note on the standard G-C-E-A uke is middle C, but many popular songs have notes below middle C.
- In addition to playing the right notes, there is the matter of rhythm. In the *Clementine* music there are four different note durations: half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes. So not only does the player have to pluck the right notes, he or she has to have the correct note durations, which makes playing melody that much more difficult.
- The ukulele sound doesn't carry well (compared, say, to the guitar), so without amplification the melody is apt to be drowned out by all the strumming.

Still, there are several reasons why a beginner should consider learning to play simple melodies on the uke.

- It helps teach you where the notes are on your fretboard.
- It opens up the possibility of 'picking' the chords instead of strumming them. The resulting harmony when you pick the individual notes of a chord can greatly enhance a song.
- In small-group sessions your melody playing will be heard and appreciated.
- When practicing alone, playing melody (as opposed to just strumming) is far more interesting. You can also mix chord strumming with melody in a variety of ways.
- It will help you learn ukulele tablature, which I explain later in this section.

Options to play melody on the ukulele

While melody playing involves "picking" individual strings, there are three methods to choose from.

- 1) **Play by ear.** When you play by ear you know where the notes are on the fretboard, you know the song's melody in your head, and you can pick out the notes during a jam session. If you can do all this you are an accomplished uke *musician* and far beyond my intended reader.

- 2) **Read the music.** In the music for *Clementine* shown above, the notes – pitch and duration – are on the treble staff. If you can read music, then all you have to do is play the notes as printed. Here are the notes from the first line of music, and how you would play them on a standard uke tuned to G-C-E-A. Play this first line of music on your ukulele.

Oh My Darling Clementine USA trad.

In a ca-vern, in a can-yon, ex-ca-va-ting for a mine, dwelt a mi-ner, for-ty

F – 1st fret, E string
 F – 1st fret, E string
 F – 1st fret, E string
 C – open C string (this is middle C, the lowest note on the ukulele)
 A – open A string
 A – open A string
 A – open A string
 F – 1st fret, E string
 F – 1st fret, E string
 A – open A string
 C – 3rd fret, A string (this C is an octave higher than middle C played in the second measure)
 C – 3rd fret, A string
 Bb – 1st fret, A string
 A – open A string
 G – open G string
 G – open G string
 A – open A string
 Bb – 1st fret, A string
 Bb – 1st fret, A string
 A – open A string
 G – open G string

- 3) **Read tablature.** Tablature is a simplified way of playing melody, and is the generally preferred method. Tablature is a ‘translation’ of the notes on the treble clef into ‘where to put your fingers and on what string’. Here is another version of *Clementine*, showing the tablature (“TAB”) below each line of musical notation.

Ukulele in C

Clementine

Arr. Peter Edvinsson

Trad.

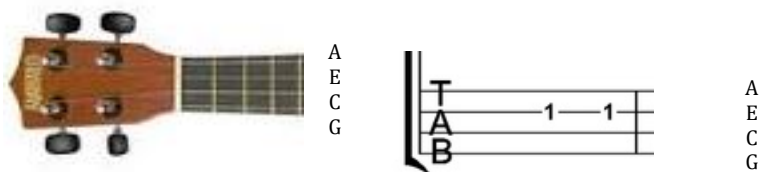
Ukulele tablature for Clementine in C major, 4/4 time. The first system shows the first four measures with chords F and Gm. The second system shows the next four measures with chords C7, F, C7, and F. The tablature uses four lines labeled T (top), A, C, and B (bottom) from top to bottom, with numbers indicating frets.

Download more free ukulele tabs at
<http://www.capotastomusic.com>

Each of the four lines of tablature represents one of the ukulele strings. The numbers refer to the frets on that string. Once you get used to tablature, you'll find it much easier to play melody compared to reading the actual music. However, you must first learn the way uke "tabs" are set up. It is *not* intuitive.

As shown below, the four strings in tabs are aligned as if you are holding the uke in front of you, the body with sound hole to the right, the tuning head to the left. Thus the A string is at the top, not the bottom. This is counter-intuitive, because when you hold the uke to play it, the A string is at the bottom. But in tablature the *top string is the A string and the bottom string is G string*. Once you get this in your head, you are on your way to playing tabs – and melody.





Now let's examine the Clementine tablature, starting with the first three notes; they are all F. You don't need to know that to play the melody from tablature. All you need to do to play the F note is press the first fret of the E string and then pluck that string. (Remember, A is on top, so the next string down is E).

After playing 3 F's, you play middle C, indicated by "0" on the C string; just pluck or pick the open C string. Next you have "0" on the A string played three times, which of course plays "A."

The next *new* note is in the fourth measure, C above middle C; this is "3" on the A string and it is played twice. The next note is B flat. In tablature you don't have to worry whether a note is sharp or flat; the tab takes care of that. B flat is played simply by pressing the first fret of the A string and then plucking or picking that string. In the last measure we have "3" on the E string twice, which plays a G, followed by the last note, A, which is the open A string.

Tablature is really simple (compared to reading music), and you will find it in practically all the beginning ukulele instruction books.

There is one problem, which I hope you noticed. This tablature gives the notes, but not their duration. The first six notes are of varying duration, as follows:


- F – dotted eighth note
- F – sixteenth note
- F – quarter note
- C – quarter note
- A – dotted eighth note
- A – sixteenth note

Duration is nowhere indicated on the tablature in this example. The only thing this tablature shows is the pitch of the note.

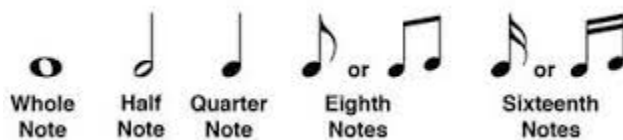
What to do? You actually have several options to play the melody with correct note durations.

- 1) **Learn to read note durations.** Most tablature will be printed with the musical notation above it, as in this example of *Clementine*. Even if you don't read music, you can quickly learn to read time signatures and note durations; you will find this much easier than reading the actual musical pitches.

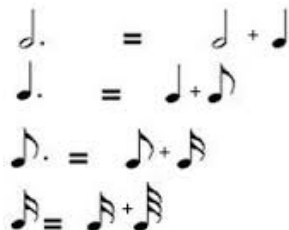


You already know that  means the music is in 3/4 time; every quarter note gets one beat and there are 3 beats to the measure: 1 *and* 2 *and* 3 *and*; 1 *and* 2 *and* 3 *and*. That's the time signature.

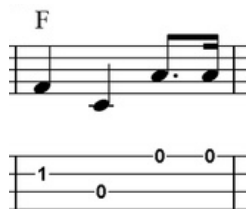
Now all you have to learn is the relative length of each note on the staff, as shown below.



A dot after any note lengthens the note by *one-half*.



The time signature 3/4 time means 3 quarter notes per measure, *or their equivalent*. Thus, for each measure, there could be a half note and one quarter note, or 6 eighth notes, etc. In the first full measure of this music, shown below, we have: quarter note followed by quarter note followed by dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note = three quarter notes.



While this might be confusing at first, once you learn the note durations, the timing of the tablature notes will become fairly obvious. In this measure you know to

play the F and C at the same duration (quarter note each), and then the two A notes much quicker. Although the first A is a dotted eighth note (one and a half times duration of eighth note), and the second A is a sixteenth note, if you played both A's at the same duration (e.g., an eighth note each) no one's going to notice, and you'll be keeping time.

So in summary, learn to read time signatures and note duration on the treble clef as you play notes from the tablature.

- 2) **Play the melody based on your knowledge of the song**, or how it is sung in the jam session. In terms of rhythm it is not much different from strumming; you really don't know how fast or slow to strum until you hear the singer, or some other instrumentalist who sets the rhythm. It's slightly more complicated for melody, because notes within a measure have varying durations, but if you know the melody you should be able to figure out how to play from tablature. This might take a few run-throughs, but once you know a song, you'll learn when to change the notes to provide the proper melody. Here is tablature for *Happy Birthday*, a melody everyone knows. You should be able to play it without having to see any music. Try it out on your uke.

Happy Birthday To You

Songwriters: Patty Hill, Mildred J. Hill Key: F 3/4 Arranged By: Kermit Tam

Ha - ppy birth - day to you Ha - ppy birth - day to you Ha - ppy
 birth - day Happy birth - day Ha - ppy birth - day to you

- 3) **Play duration from notated tablature.** Tablature will often show note durations if it is not accompanied by musical notation. Here is a more sophisticated tablature for Happy Birthday from UkuleleHunt.com. You know the melody, so you should know how to play it. Even though there is no accompanying musical notation, there is a lot of information in this tablature.

Happy Birthday

Tab: UkuleleHunt.com

 = 98

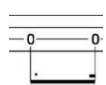
Ukulele tab for "Happy Birthday" in 3/4 time. The tab includes chords (F, C7, Bb, Dm) and lyrics: "Hap- py Birth- day to you, Hap- py Birth- day to you, dear Yg- ritte, Hap- py Birth- day to you."

Let's examine the first measure.

 = 98

Close-up of the first measure of the ukulele tab, showing the first three staves (Treble, Alto, Bass) and the lyrics "Hap- py".

- The quarter note = 98 is a metronome marking, indicating that the speed should be 98 quarter notes a minute, which is fast. You can ignore that if playing alone.
- The 3/4 time signature means to play 3 quarter notes per measure, *or their equivalent*.
- In terms of note duration, the bracket underneath the two middle C notes



is the same as



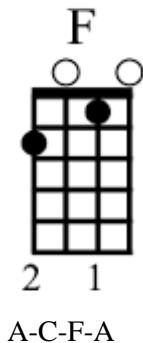
in standard musical notation. It shows a dotted eighth note and then a sixteenth note. There are four instances in this tablature where this note duration is indicated. In all the other measures, there are three quarter notes per measure.

Until you become a more experienced player, I wouldn't spend much effort on studying note duration in tablature. The reason is two-fold: one, it is often not included; and two, better to play based on one of the first two methods: reading note duration from the standard musical notation or from your knowledge of the melody. The 2nd option – knowing the melody – is much easier for the beginner.

There is more to this tablature that bears discussion. What about the stacked notes? In measure 7 of *Happy Birthday*, under the F chord, are four stacked notes: 0-1-0-2. Here you have two options. You can pluck all four strings together, or you can strum them. Either way, what notes are you playing?

Open A string = A
1st fret of E string = F
Open C string = C
2nd fret of G string = A

A-F-C-A. Look familiar? It's the F chord, notated above the 4 stacked notes.



Thus, in this tablature you are playing melody notes *and* chords. And you don't need to be able to read music!

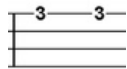
Beginner Uke Books

As stated earlier, practically all beginner uke books introduce tablature. I recommend getting a beginner uke book (if you don't already have one) and going through it page by page, playing the tablature presented for each song. Here are just a few of the many such books available on Amazon.com.

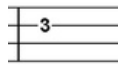


Quiz Time

- 1) What note does this tablature play?



- 2) What note does this tablature play?



- 3) What is the lowest note you can play on a uke tuned to G-C-E-A?
 4) In the first three frets of a standard tune uke, how many C notes can you play?
 5) Where do you play F above middle C on the fretboard?

SECTION 10 – ANATOMY OF UKULELE SHEET MUSIC

Music written for the ukulele can appear in one of three formats: 1) standard musical notation in a lead sheet, which can be played by anyone who reads music; 2) song sheets, which includes lyrics and chords only, and is the preferred method for most ukulele groups; 3) tablature, which can be used to play melody and chords in lieu of standard musical notation. The following sheet music for ukulele includes both the treble clef and letters for chords (together, a lead sheet), plus tablature.

SMILE

by Charlie Chaplin from the movie "Modern Times"
Arranged for ukulele by Ukulele Mike Lynch

play with thumb throughout . . .

5 D m D dim G m Eb dim


When there are clouds in the sky, you'll get by. If you

5

2 0 1 2 0 1 3 0 1 2 3 0

2 2 1 2 2 0

9 G m Bbm6



smile through your fear and sor-row. Smile and may - be to-mor-row

1) Standard music notation in the treble clef

In addition to all the notes of the melody and chords, the treble clef also shows the time signature and song key. Here is the first line in standard music notation.




If you are a musician, standard musical notation includes everything you need to play the song. The chords noted by the letter symbols are *added* to the standard music notation, for the benefit of uke players who just want to play the chords.



Thus we have an F written over the notes for the chord F and Am over the notes for the A minor chord. The first three stacked notes A-C-F are just an ‘inversion’ of the F-chord notes, F-A-C. The next set of three stacked notes are A-C-E, which is the A minor chord. But again, you don’t have to know any of this to play the ukulele. All you have to know is how to finger the F chord and the Am chord, and strum to the proper rhythm.

The middle line of the treble clef is a B. (Going up, the lines represent notes E-G-B-D-F; this is the familiar “Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge”.) Note that there is a flat sign (b) over the 3rd line in front of the time signature; this means the B note is always played as B flat, unless otherwise changed in some specific measure. This B flat (or Bb) is also the *key signature* for the piece, and signifies the song is in the key of F.

(The number of sharps or flats indicates which key the song is in. The F scale has one B flat. If the key was C there would be no flats or sharps. If the key was G it

would have one F# and would look like this:  .)

Next to the flat sign is the time signature “4/4”, meaning 4 beats to a measure, with each quarter note getting one beat.

2) Song sheets: chords and words only

Song sheets omit the treble clef and tablature, and include just the chord symbols and lyrics. In a jam session, if someone is singing the melody, you can strum just

the chords, changing on the appropriate word or syllable. In a typical lead sheet the title will include both the time signature and key of the song. The lead sheet of *Smile* would look like this.

Smile

By Charlie Chaplin, from the movie “Modern Times”

$\frac{4}{4}$ Key F

F **Am**
Smile though your heart is aching. Smile even though it's breaking.

Dm **Ddim** **Gm** **Ebdim**
When there are clouds in the sky, you'll get by. If you

Gm **Bbmin6**
Smile through your fear and sorry. Smile and maybe tomorrow.

Ignore for the moment the fact that Ddim, Ebdim and Bbmin6 are uncommon chords that you might or might not play, you can easily see when to play each new chord. The song sheet tells you to play the F chord on the first “Smile” and switch to the Am chord on the next “Smile”, etc. For each chord you would strum in 4/4 time, to keep the rhythm generated by the singer.

(Similarly, as I'll discuss below, uke tablature is added to the standard music notation for the benefit of players who want to play the melody and chords without having to read standard music notation.)

3) **Tablature showing melody notes and chords.**

If you don't read music, and don't know the chord fingerings, you can find all the information needed in the tablature. Sometimes all you have is tablature, but more commonly it is appended below each line of standard musical notation. This particular tablature also includes the strum pattern. Let's examine the first line of music.

by Charlie Chaplin from the movie "Modern Times"
Arranged for ukulele by Ukulele Mike Lynch

F A m

- 1st measure. The stacked notes 1-0-2 in the first measure means to leave the A string open, press the first fret of the E string, leave the C string open, and press the 2nd fret of the G string. When you do this and you strum down or up, you have the F chord, F-A-C. (Although a “0” is not shown for the open A string, you would strum all four strings for the F chord.)

Note that when you strum *down* on these four strings, you get A-C-F-A. (Strumming down you hit the G string first, then the C, then the E, then the A.) When you strum up on these four strings you get A-F-C-A. Same chord; either way, it includes all the notes of the F chord. The tablature shows you what strings and frets to press. This is much simpler than trying to read the notes in the treble clef.

The three vertical lines just below the lyrics are strums for the measure. And here is where tablature can fall short; it does not indicate timing. In the standard musical notation the F chord is comprised of half notes, which means the F chord gets two beats, with the G and A getting one beat each. It would play like this:

The tablature shows only 3 strums for this measure, because it wants you hold the first strum for two beats, but you wouldn't know that unless you understood the timing of the notes in the standard musical notation above the tabs. (It's a good idea to learn to tell the difference between an eighth note, a quarter note and a half

note). Actually, if I was playing this, I would just make it easier and do four strums per measure.

- 2nd measure. This one is relatively simple: Notes G, F, E, and D, played in 4/4 time, so each note gets one beat and one strum.
- 3rd measure. This is similar to the first measure, with the A minor chord lasting two full beats, followed by two quarter notes, F and G. (Again, a “0” is not shown for the open A string in the A minor chord, but you should strum all four strings for this chord.)
- 4th measure. Again we have a simple measure: notes F, E, D, and C, played in 4/4 time, so each note gets one beat and one strum.
- In the rest of the tablature, wherever you see stacked notes, you are to strum all four strings. Now here is where tablature shines. You probably aren’t going to know the fingerings for Ddim, Ebdim and Bbdim6. Probably not one in a hundred players will know the Bbdim6 chord, which is 1-1-1-0. (By convention, in writing out tablature, the A string is first, the 2 string 2nd, the C string 3rd and G string 4th.) But tablature shows that all you have to do to play it is press the first fret of A, E and C strings, leave the G string open, then strum all four strings. Simple! And you don’t have to read music or look up obscure chords.

QUIZ TIME

- 1) What chord is played by tablature 2-1-2-0?
- 2) What chord is played by tablature 2-3-2-0?
- 3) As you look on tablature on the page, what is the bottom string?
- 4) One F# in the treble clef before the time signature signifies what key?
- 5) In time signature 4/4, what do the numbers represent?

ANSWERS TO QUIZ TIME

SECTION 1 – Notes of the Ukulele

- 1) One whole step
- 2) One and a half steps
- 3) E
- 4) C
- 5) Two

SECTION 2 – Keys and Chord Progressions

- 1) Bb
- 2) F
- 3) G
- 4) C and E
- 5) F-Bb-C7

SECTION 3- The Uke Fret Board

- 1) E
- 2) One – the E string pressed at the first fret
- 3) Five
- 4) Five
- 5) G chord

SECTION 4 – Chord Substitution

- 1) A-D#-F-A
- 2) E string; when you lift your finger only the G string is fretted, and you have Am.
- 3) CM7, C7, Am, A7
- 4) Fourth fret of C string
- 5) Bb, D7, Bm, B, E

SECTION 5 – Lead and Song Sheets, and Chords

- 1) D-G-A
- 2) G-C-D
- 3) False; a new chord can start anywhere
- 4) Check the first and last chords of the piece; if they differ, go by the last chord.
- 5) Three-fourths time, which means 3 beats to each measure, with the quarter note getting one beat

SECTION 6 – Chord Vexation and Movable Chords

- 1) One that can be moved up or down the fret board without lifting the fingers.
- 2) Key of A
- 3) C
- 4) 7th fret
- 5) Barre chord

SECTION 7 – Chord Tricks

- 1) Hawaiian D7 leaves out the D note.
- 2) Press C string at 4th fret
- 3) Lift finger from E string and then press E string at 1st fret
- 4) CMaj7 and C7
- 5) E7

SECTION 8 - Strumming

- 1) Keep strumming any chord that fits the song.
- 2) 8 times; 4 beats to the measure, each beat a down-up strum
- 3) 6 times; 3 beats to the measure, each beat a down-up strum
- 4) The calypso strum is used in 4/4 time.
- 5) A soft or felt pick

:

SECTION 9 – Playing Melody on the Ukulele

- 1) C
- 2) G
- 3) Middle C
- 4) Two
- 5) 1st fret, E string

SECTION 10 – Anatomy of Ukulele Sheet Music

- 1) G7
- 2) G
- 3) G string
- 4) Key of G
- 5) Four beats to a measure, with each quarter note getting one beat

WEB SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

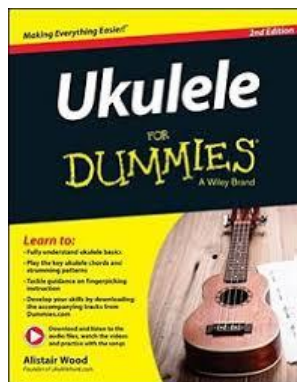
www.doctoruke.com

Top website if you only want one



<http://ukulelehunt.com/>

Companion web site for the popular *Ukulele for Dummies* book



<http://ukuleleunderground.com/>

Ukulele Underground (fee for full access)



Recommended Uke Web Sites (continued)

Ukulele Buddy (fee for full access)

<http://www.ukulelebuddy.com/>

Ukulele Tricks

<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/>

Ukulele Mike

<http://www.ukulelemikelynch.com/>

Uke Chords Lookup

<http://www.ukulele-chords.com>

Ukulele beginner lessons on YouTube (of which there are dozens; just enter ‘beginner uke lessons’)

<http://youtube.com>

Ukulele music theory on YouTube (many excellent videos; just enter ‘uke music theory’)

<http://youtube.com>

Also, for piano keyboard diagrams and basic music theory information

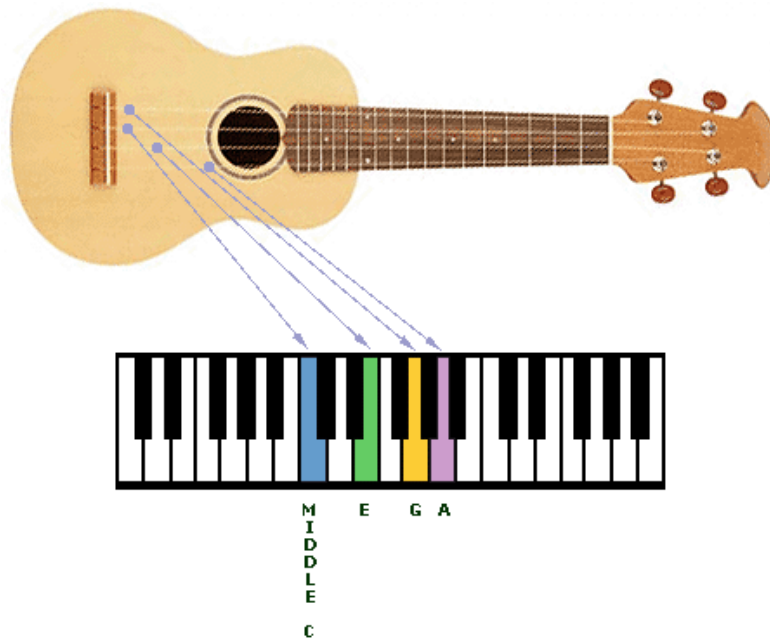
<https://www.basicmusictheory.com/>

APPENDIX A: UKULELE TYPES

Ukuleles come in four sizes, soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone. They are all four string, but the first three have a different tuning than the baritone.



The first three – soprano, concert, tenor – have the G-C-E-A tuning, as shown below with reference to the piano keys. The open C string on the uke plays middle C, the lowest note with standard uke tuning.



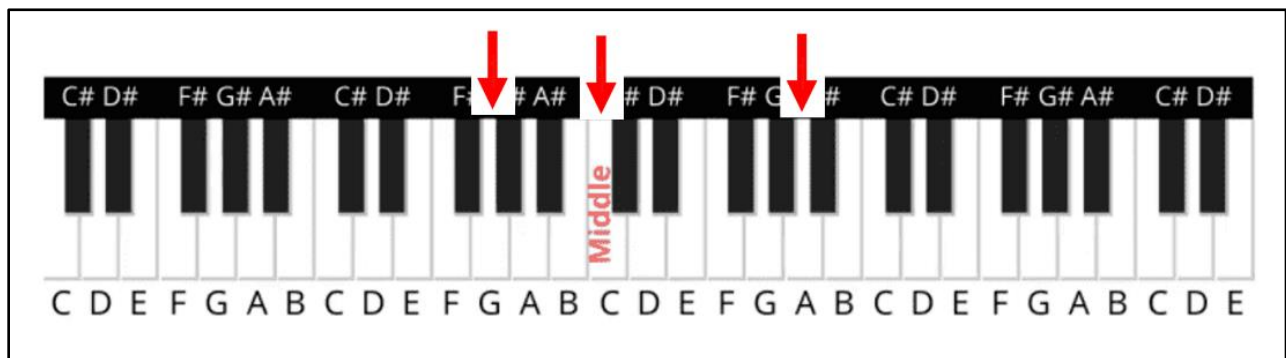
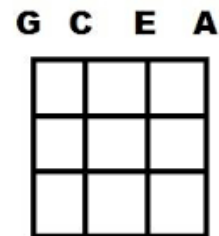
Below I expand on the above keyboard to include the low G string, popular with a lot of players, particularly those with tenor ukes.

G-C-E-A Tuning

Includes soprano, concert, and tenor uke. Standard re-entrant tuning for the 4 strings is G-C-E-A, with the G string between middle C and A (hence “re-entrant”). If the ukulele is tuned with a low G (i.e., below middle C), the range is then low G to A. In the keyboard diagram below, the 2nd and 3rd arrows (starting from the left) represent the range of standard G-C-E-A tuning. The first and third arrows represent the range of tuning when a low G string is used. Here are the hertz numbers (frequency) for the four standard strings plus low G. The numbers “3” and “4” refer to the octave on the keyboard.



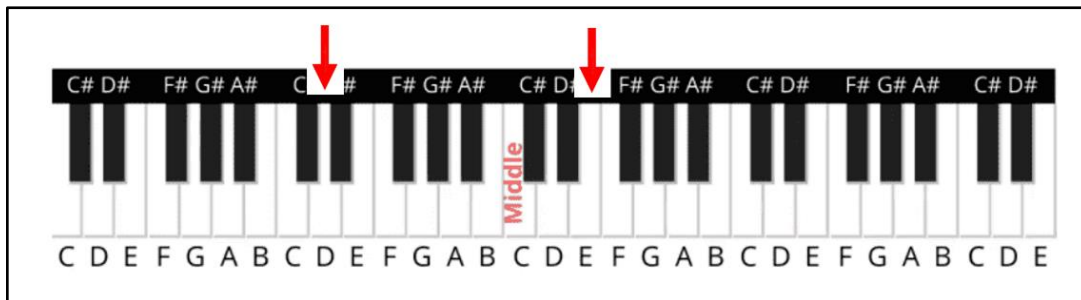
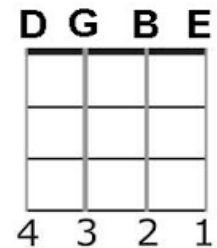
- A4 – 440 Hz (string closest to floor when playing)
- E4 – 330 Hz
- C4 – 262 Hz
- G3 – 196 Hz (low G string)
- G4 – 392 Hz



Baritone Uke

The tuning is D-G-B-E, so the open string range is D below middle C, up to E above middle C (arrows). Here are the hertz numbers (frequency) for the four baritone ukulele strings.

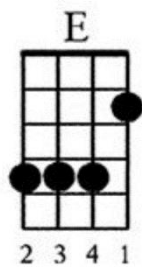
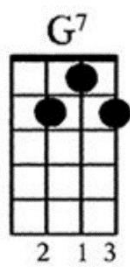
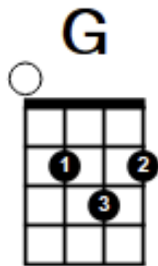
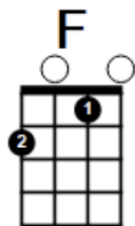
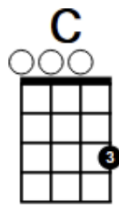
E4 – 330 Hz (string closest to floor when playing)
 B3 – 248 Hz
 G3 – 196 Hz
 D3 – 147 Hz



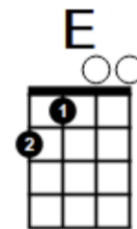
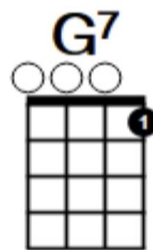
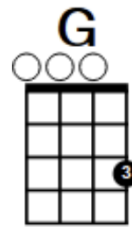
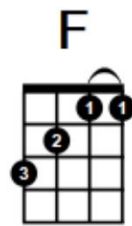
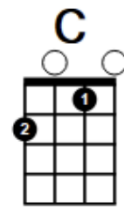
Because the baritone uke has a different tuning, it has different fingering for the chords compared to the soprano, concert, and tenor ukes. (The baritone's four strings are tuned the same as the first four strings of the standard guitar: D-G-B-E.)

Below are a few chords for G-C-E-A tuning (left column: soprano, concert, tenor ukes) vs. D-G-B-E tuning (right column: baritone uke). Note that some chords have easier fingering in G-C-E-A whereas others are easier in D-G-B-E.

G-C-E-A



D-G-B-E



Unlike the baritone uke, G-C-E-A ukes come in a variety of shapes and styles, including the popular “fruit shapes.”



There are also ukes made out of cigar and other boxes. As a rule, all these odd-shaped ukes come with standard tuning, G-C-E-A.

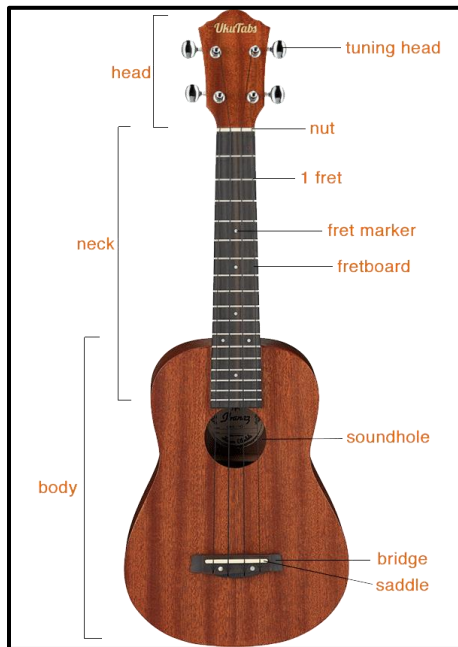


Another popular instrument is the banjolele, which also has the standard G-C-E-A tuning, but with the sound of a banjo.



Banjolele

BASIC NOMENCLATURE



The basic nomenclature of the ukulele is shown in this figure (same for all four types – soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone).

Note that the word “fret” is used to indicate both the metal strips that run perpendicular to the length of the fret board, *and* to the space between these strips. When discussing chord fingering, we say “to play B press the 2nd fret of the A string,” or “for A minor press the 1st fret of the G string.” In this instructional language, fret obviously means the space between the metal strips. You never press the actual strip to play a note. Despite universal use of the word fret to mean the space and not the metal strip, many web sites and books show “fret” as the strip itself. So accept that “fret” is defined both ways. Just don’t press the metal strip when playing a note!

One more bit of terminology not shown in the figure.

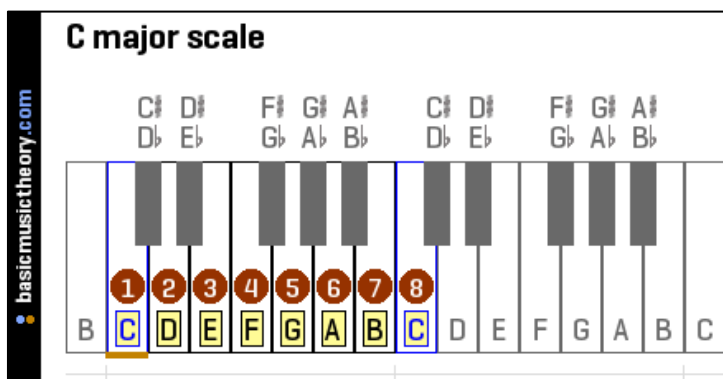
“Up the neck” means toward the sound hole. “Down the neck” means toward the tuning head.

APPENDIX B: THE C MAJOR SCALE

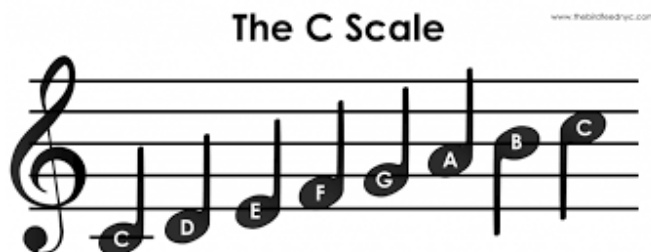
Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com

You can view this scale on the piano and in notated music. First, the piano. If you don't have access to a keyboard, you can use an online keyboard simulator, such as the one at <http://virtualpiano.net/>. When you press the note on the simulated keyboard using your mouse, the name of the note shows at top, as in this figure from the simulator web site. (The numbers you see when each key is pressed only refer to the keys of this particular simulator; in the mid-range the notes would be G-32, C-25, E-29 and A-34.)

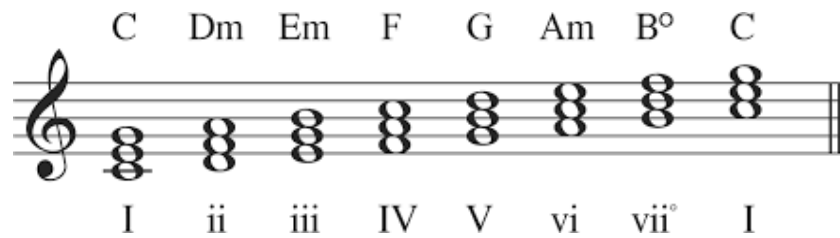




Here are the same notes as they appear on the treble clef.



Each note of the C major scale can serve as the root of a 3-note chord, as shown below.

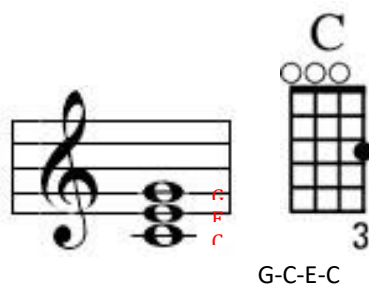


The C, F and G notes are the roots of the I, IV and V chords: C, F and G. These are called major chords (and written in upper case Roman numerals) because of the specific arrangement of half steps between the letters. (A half step is the distance between any two adjacent keys on the piano keyboard.) A major chord can have “maj” or “M” after the letter, but that is generally left off; when there is no qualifying word (major, minor, diminished), the chord is taken to be major.

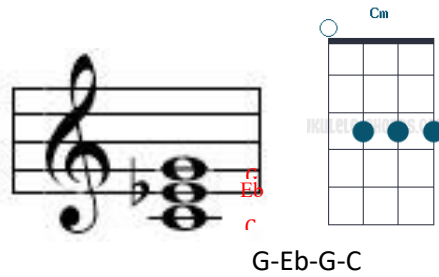
The other chords in the C major scale, D, E and A, are minor chords, and are notated with a small “m” after the letter, and lower case Roman numerals. These are called minor chords because of a different arrangement of half steps between the letters. (I will come to the B chord later, for it is neither major nor minor, but “diminished”). An excellent brief discussion of these “chord qualities” can be found at

<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/major-minor-diminished-augmented-chords-explained/>.

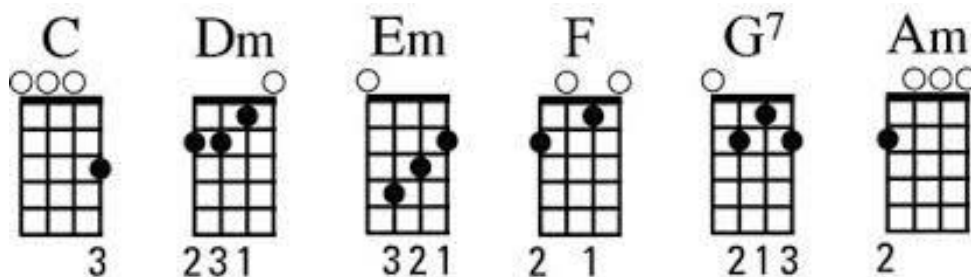
In a 3-note chord, when there are 4 half steps between the first and second note, and 3 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is a MAJOR CHORD. Below is the C major chord on the treble clef and the uke fret board: C-E-G. (Going from bottom to top, the lines of treble clef are E-G-B-D-F and the spaces are F-A-C-E. The first line below the clef is middle C)



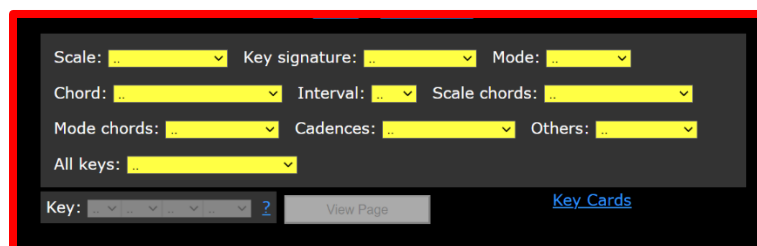
In a 3-note chord, when there are 3 half steps between the first and second note, and 4 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is a MINOR CHORD. Below is the C minor chord on the treble clef and the uke fret board: C-Eb-G.



Note that C minor is *not* part of the C major scale. The 6 major and minor chords for the C major scale are C major, D minor, E minor, F major, G major (or G7 major), and A minor. The chord diagrams as played in first position (strings closest to the nut) are shown below; the numbers refer to the fingering, with 1= index finger, 2 = middle finger, 3 = ring finger and 4 = pinkie.



The best way to visualize these chords and their half steps is on the piano keyboard. The following keyboard figures are from <https://www.basicmusictheory.com/c-major-triad-chords>. On that website you can enter any chord and see the piano keys. Adjacent to the piano keys for each chord I have the fingering for the uke.



A half step is the distance between any two adjacent keys on the piano *and* the distance between any two adjacent frets on the uke keyboard (for a given string).

Next to each keyboard diagram is shown the uke chord. For each of the uke chords, the notes played are shown below the chord diagram. Thus, for example, when you strum the C chord you are playing G-C-E-C. Note that G7 commonly substitutes for G in the C major scale.

C major scale chords

C chord is C-E-G – the “1” (or I) chord

Between C and E is 4 half steps (C to C#, C# to D, D to D#, D# to E)

Between E and G is 3 half steps (E to F, F to F#, F# to G)

C is a major chord

C major chord 1 is C major

The diagram shows a piano keyboard with the C major scale highlighted in blue. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The C major chord (C-E-G) is shown with fingerings: C (1), E (2), and G (3). To the right, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the C major chord in the first position, with the root C on the 1st fret of the 5th string, and the 3rd and 5th strings open. The notes G, C, E, C are listed below the fretboard.

Dm chord is D-F-A – the “2” (or ii) chord

Between D and F is 3 half steps

Between F and A is 4 half steps

Dm is a minor chord

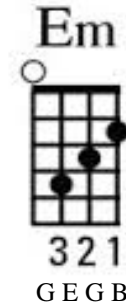
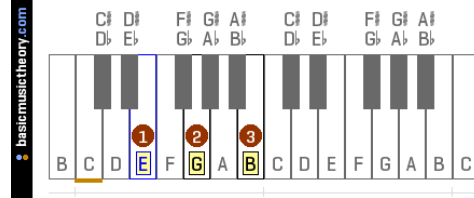
C major chord 2 is D minor

The diagram shows a piano keyboard with the D minor scale highlighted in blue. The notes are D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. The D minor chord (D-F-A) is shown with fingerings: D (1), F (2), and A (3). To the right, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the D minor chord in the first position, with the root D on the 2nd fret of the 4th string, and the 3rd and 5th strings open. The notes A, D, F, A are listed below the fretboard.

Em chord is E-G-B – the “3” (or iii) chord

Between E and G is 3 half steps
Between G and B is 4 half steps
Em is a minor chord

C major chord 3 is E minor

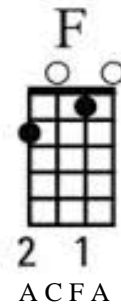
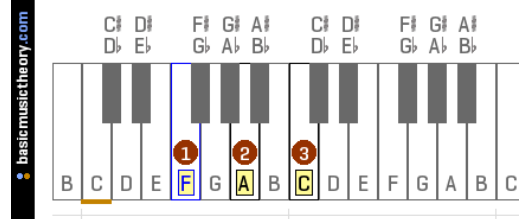


* * *

F chord is F-A-C – the “4” (or IV) chord

Between F and A is 4 half steps
Between A and C is 3 half steps
F is a major chord

C major chord 4 is F major

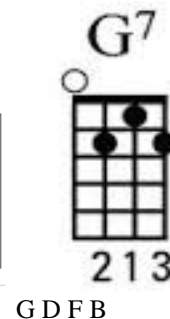
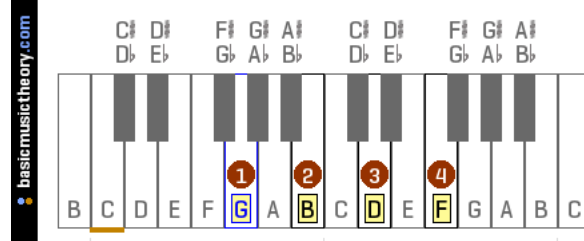


* * *

G7 chord is G-B-D-F – the “5-7” (or V7) chord

Between G and B is 4 half steps
Between B and D is 3 half steps
Between D and F is 3 half steps
[Note: G7 commonly substitutes for G in the C major scale]

C major 7th chord 5 is G dominant 7th



G D F B

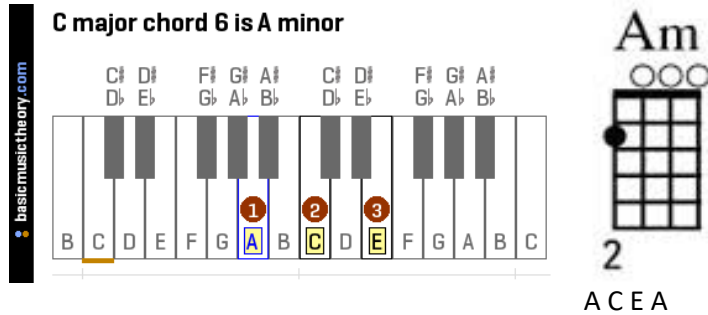
* * *

A chord is A-C-E – the “6” (or vi) chord

Between A and C is 3 half steps

Between C and E is 4 half steps

Am is a minor chord



* * *

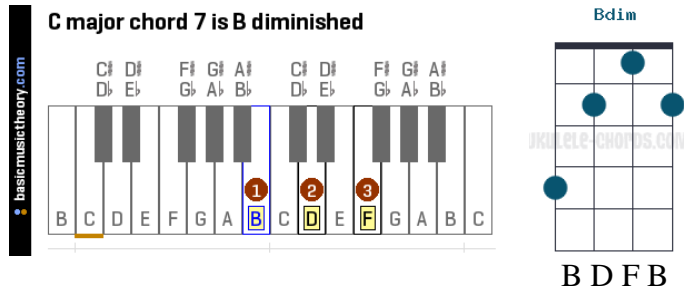
What about B? In the C major scale, the B chord is neither major nor minor, but is “diminished.” Bdim is very uncommon in popular music for the uke.

B chord is B-D-F – the “7” (or vii °) chord

Between B and D is 3 half steps

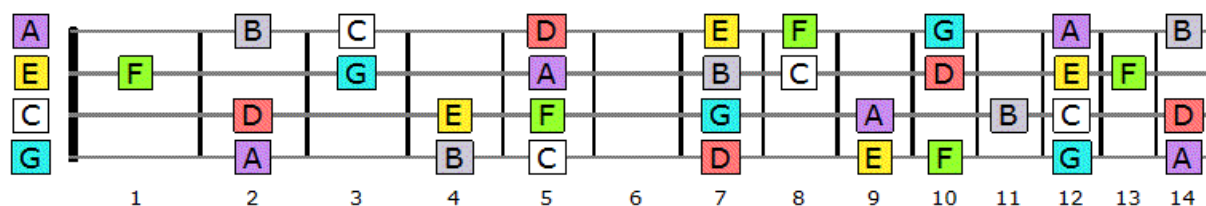
Between D and F is 3 half steps

B is a diminished chord, written Bdim, notated as shown above (or vii °)



In Section 3, I showed how to play the C major scale, starting with the open string C. This is again shown below (figure from <http://www.ezfolk.com/uke/Tutorials/major-scales/major-scales.html>). Remember, a half step is the distance between any two adjacent frets on the uke keyboard, for a given string. For example in the A string, B and C are a half step apart. The next fret up from C is C#, etc.

C Major



Plucking the C Major Scale on Your Fret Board

C – open C string

D – 2nd fret, C string

E – open E string

F – 1st fret, E string

G – 3rd fret, E string

A – open A string

B – 2nd fret, A string

C (one octave higher than first C) – 3rd fret, A string

The open C string is the lowest note on the ukulele that is tuned in G-C-E-A; plucking it gives middle C. Going from open C string to 3rd fret, A string goes up a whole octave: from middle C to the next higher C. You can also play the C scale an octave higher, by starting at the C note obtained by pressing 3rd fret, A string. For this next octave of the C major scale, ALL NOTES ARE PLAYED ON THE A STRING.

C – 3rd fret

D – 5th fret

E – 7th fret

F – 8th fret

G – 10th fret

A – 12th fret

B – 14th fret

C - 15th fret (not shown in diagram)

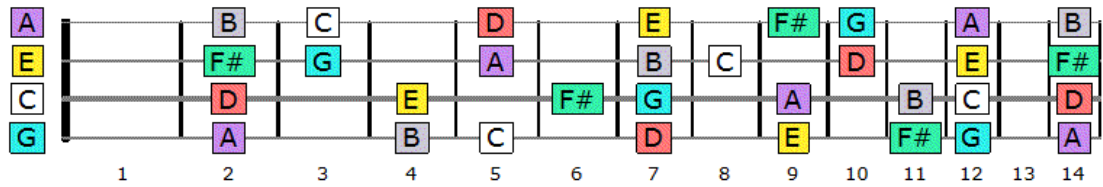
This exercise shows that the 15-string uke is a two-octave instrument. By contrast, the piano's 88 keys span 7 octaves.

* * *

Once you've mastered the C scale on the uke, you should be able to figure out where the notes are and then play any other scale. Here is the G major scale, which contains on F# (figure from <http://www.ezfolk.com/uke/Tutorials/major-scales/major-scales.html>). The more you practice these and other scales, the more quickly you will become familiar

with the uke keyboard. Remember, two adjacent frets for any string are the same as two adjacent keys on the keyboard – a half step apart.

G Major

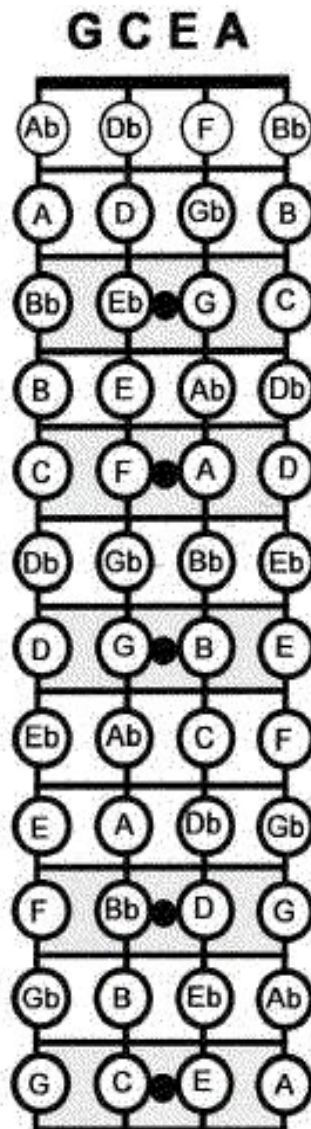
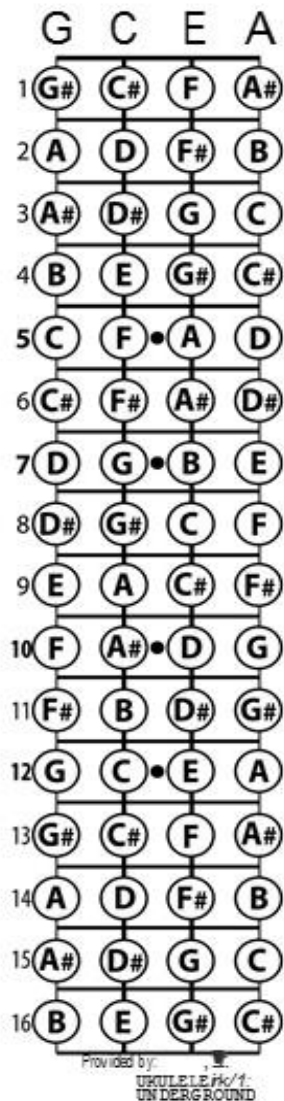


Plucking the G Major Scale on Your Fret Board

- G – open G string
- A – open A string
- B – 2nd fret, A string
- C – 3rd fret, A string
- D – 5th fret, A string
- E – 7th fret, A string
- F# – 9th fret, A string
- G – 10th fret, A string

APPENDIX C: THE UKE FRET BOARD IN BOTH SHARPS & FLATS

On the left is the uke fret board as shown in Section 3. This figure uses sharps (#) in its labeling of the piano black keys: half steps between A and B, D and E, etc. On the right is another figure of the fret board, where all the black keys are now labeled as flats (b). The rule is, when you are going UP the fret board (toward the sound hole), sharps are used for naming these notes. When you are going DOWN the fret board (toward the nut), flats are used. You will see use of both sharps and flats in various chord diagrams. Just keep in mind that A# is the same as Bb, C# the same as Db, etc., etc.



APPENDIX D: BASIC CHORDS FOR THE UKULELE – FROM 6 DIFFERENT WEB SITES

Numbers that head each column refer to web sites below the table. Thus “1” lists the 20 most common uke chords from Ukulelehunt’s web site; “2” lists the “11 chords you must know” from the Ukulele Tricks web site; etc.. If there is no “+” in the column, the chord is not listed in that web site. The only chords listed on all 6 web sites are C, G and F, which are the three chords in the I-IV-V chord progression for the key of C.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
C	+	+	+	+	+	+
G	+	+	+	+	+	+
F	+	+	+	+	+	+
D	+	+	+		+	+
Am	+	+	+		+	+
A	+		+		+	+
Dm	+	+	+			+
Bb	+					
D7	+		+	+		
G7	+		+	+		
Em	+	+	+		+	+
E7	+		+			
A7	+		+			
Bm	+	+	+			
C7	+		+	+		
B	+		+			
E	+	+	+		+	+
Eb	+					
Fm	+		+			
Gm	+		+	+		
F#	+					
Cm			+			
B7			+			
F7			+			

1. 20 Most Common Ukulele Chords
<http://ukulelehunt.com/2011/09/07/most-common-ukulele-chords/>
2. 11 Must Know Chords for Beginners
<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/11-must-know-ukulele-chords-for-beginners/>
3. Basic Uke Chords for Beginning Players
<https://ukuguides.com/guides/basic-ukulele-chords-for-beginning-players/>
4. 7 Easy Chords for Beginners
<http://takelessons.com/blog/7-easy-ukulele-chords-for-beginners-z10>
5. 8 Must Know Ukulele Chords
<http://www.slideshare.net/UkuleleChords/8->

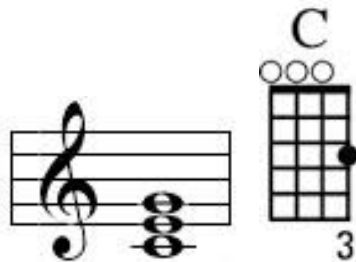
APPENDIX E: AUGMENTED AND DIMINISHED CHORDS

Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com

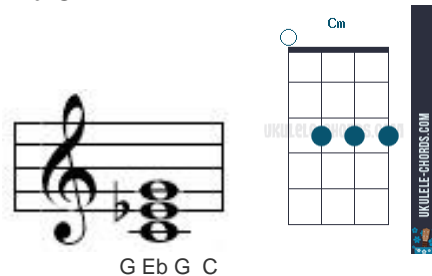
Augmented and Diminished chords often appear in song sheets. While they are not a top priority for beginning uke players, they do bear some explanation. Also, diminished chords have some specific features you will want to learn. First, a bit of music theory.

There are four main qualities of chords: major, minor, diminished and augmented. In this context, qualities are defined by the number of half steps between notes.

- In a 3-note chord, when there are 4 half steps between the first and second note, and 3 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is a MAJOR CHORD. Here is C major, C-E-G.

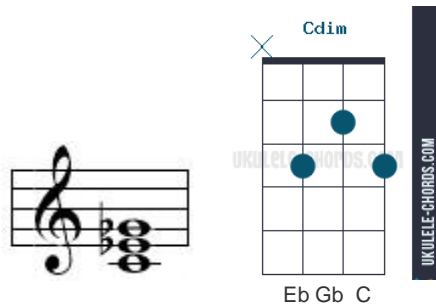


- In a 3-note chord, when there are 3 half steps between the first and second note, and 4 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is a MINOR CHORD. Here is C minor, C-Eb-G.

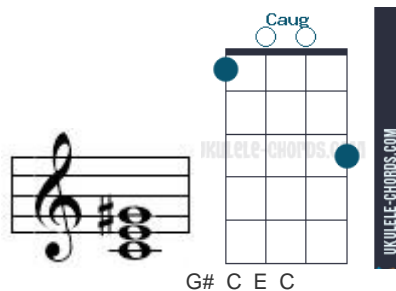


Now we proceed to DIMINISHED and AUGMENTED chords. (All four types are succinctly explained at <http://www.ukuleletricks.com/major-minor-diminished-augmented-chords-explained/>.)

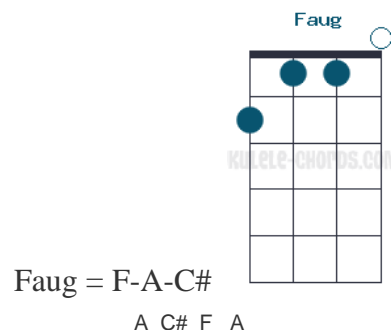
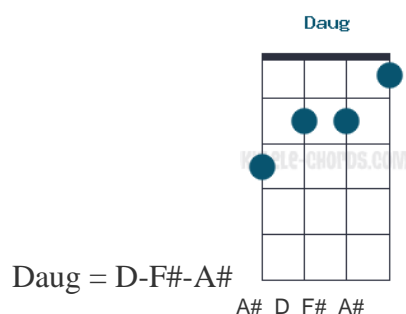
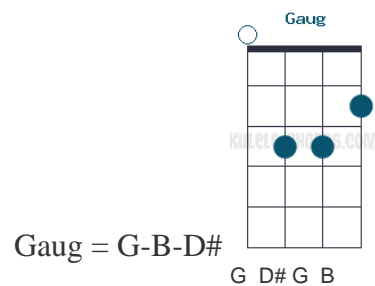
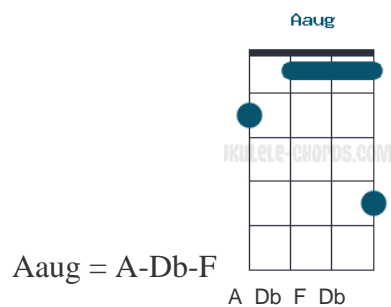
- In a 3-note chord, when there are 3 half steps between the first and second note, and 3 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is a DIMINISHED CHORD. Here is C major diminished, C-Eb-Gb. (X over the G string means you don't hit the G string).



- In a 3-note chord, when there are 4 half steps between the first and second note, and 4 half steps between the 2nd and 3rd note, it is an AUGMENTED CHORD. Here is C major augmented, C-E-G#.



Augmented chords have the pattern 1, 3, #5, so you just raise the 5th or top note by one half step to get the augmented chord. In addition to the Caug above, below are four more examples.



More on Augmented Chords

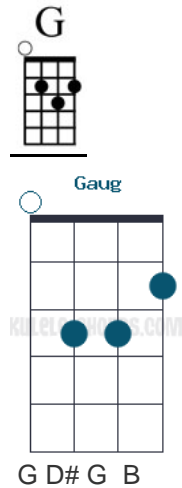
The most common use of augmented chords is to help transition between I and vi chords. Here is the C major scale with Nashville notation. The triad or 3-note chord is indicated below the scale note, and below that is the fingering for the chord.

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim

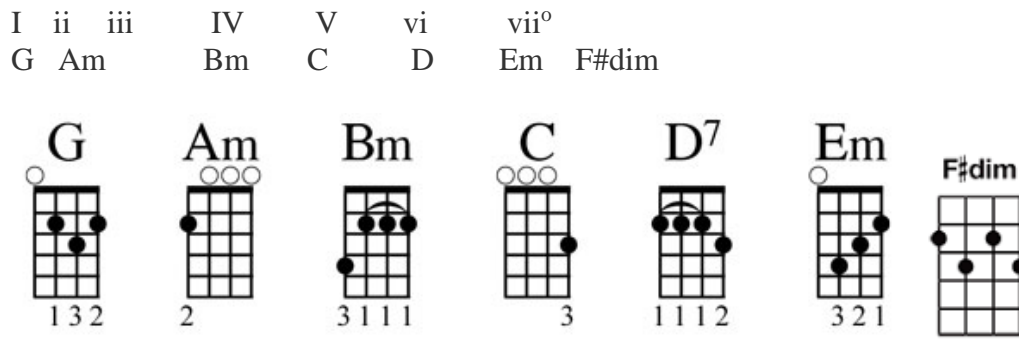
To go from C to Am is a smoother transition if you first go from C to Caug. Thus the progression would be C-Caug-Am.

It works going the other way also. If you want to go from Am to C, the smoother progression is via Caug.

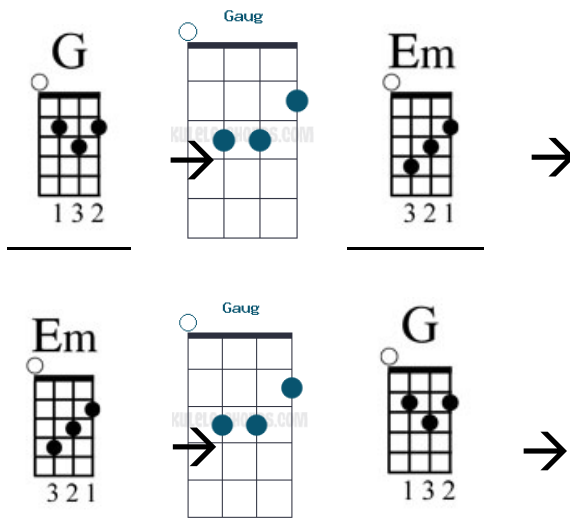
I will cover one more augmented chord – Gaug – then move on to diminished chords. Gaug is G-B-D#. G to B is 4 half steps and B to D# is 4 half steps. The uke fret board, left to right, plays these notes as: G-D#-G-B. Note that it is the G chord with G# instead of G.



The G scale chords are shown below (here D7 substitutes for D.) The I-IV-V progression is G-C-D7.



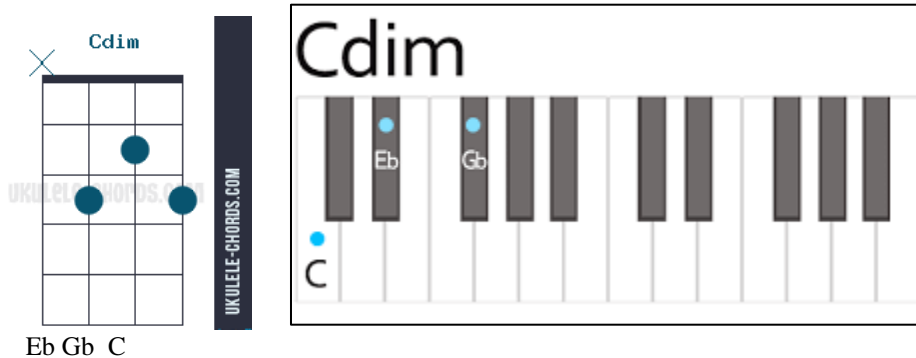
Gaug can be used as a transition when you go from I chord (G) to vi chord (Em), or the other way, from vi (Em) to I (G).



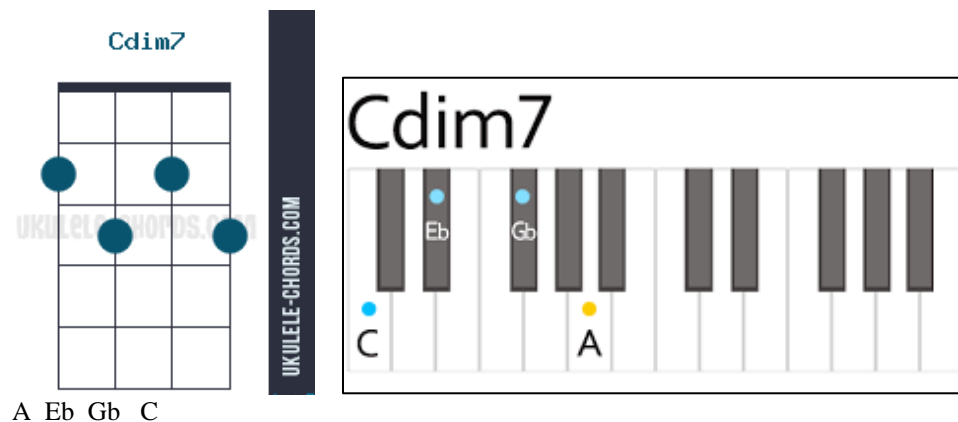
More on Diminished Chords

Here is one important aspect about diminished chords you should learn. *Just 3 basic finger patterns can be used for all the diminished chords.*

To see how this works, let's go back to the Cdim chord. In the fingering below, G is not strummed. Strumming the other three strings, moving left to right, you get Eb, Gb and C, which is the Cdim chord, C-Eb-Gb. Here is the Cdim chord as fingered on the fretboard, and as it is played on the piano keyboard.



What happens if you press the G string at the 2nd fret, as shown below? This will give an A, so that when all four strings are pressed and strummed, you get A-Eb-Gb-C. This is really a Cdim7 chord, not a Cdim chord. Cdim7 has the same notes as Cdim, plus an added A. So whenever you see Cdim, you can play Cdim7.



Cdim: C-Eb-Gb

There are 3 half steps between C and Eb, and between Eb and Gb

Cdim7: C-Eb-Gb-A

There are 3 half steps between C and Eb, between Eb and Gb, and between Gb and A

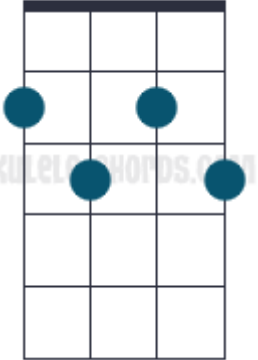
Again, whenever the chord to be played is Cdim, you can play Cdim7. That's simply because it is the same chord, with just an added A note 3 steps above the Gb.

Now the really good news. The exact same fingering pattern for Cdim7 can be used to play other diminished chords: Any of the notes you play with this finger pattern will correspond to the diminished chord of that note.

With this fingering you are playing notes A, D#, F# and C, so all those diminished chords are also being played. Ebdim is the same as D#dim, and Gbdim is the same as F#dim. Hence,

Gbdim, F#dim, Adim, D#dim and Ebdim can *all* be played with:

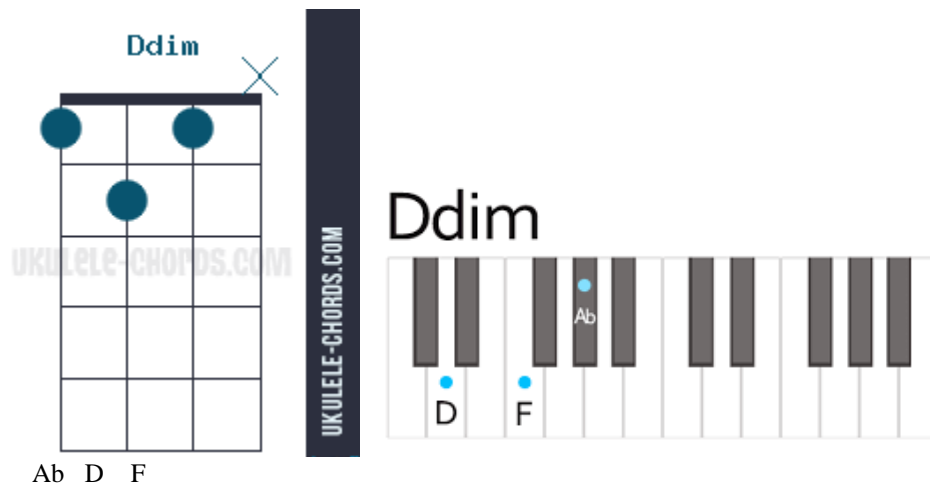
Same finger pattern for:



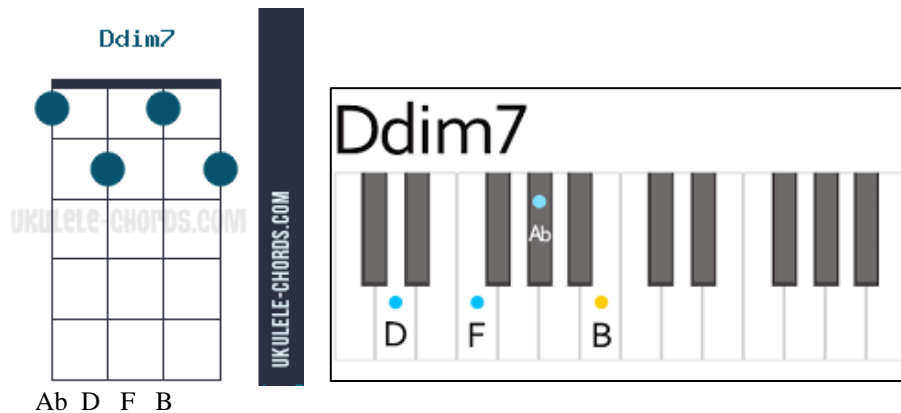
A Eb Gb C

Cdim
F#dim (Gbdim)
Adim
D#dim (Ebdim)

Now let's look at Ddim, which will introduce another finger pattern for a different group of diminished chords. In the finger pattern below, A string is not strummed. From the other three strings, moving left to right, you get Ab, D and F, which is the Ddim chord, D-F-Ab.



What happens if you press the A string at the 2nd fret, as shown below? Strumming will now give Ab, D, F and B. By pressing four frets, you really have a Ddim7 chord, not a Ddim chord. Whenever you see Ddim, you can play Ddim7. That's because it is the same chord, with just an added B note 3 steps above the Ab.



Ddim: D-F-Ab

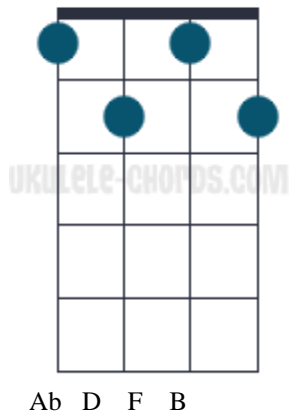
There are 3 half steps between D and F, and between F and Ab.

Ddim7: D-F-Ab-B

There are 3 half steps between D and F, between F and Ab, and between Ab and B.

Now more good news. The exact same fingering for Ddim7 can be used to play another group of diminished chords. With this fingering you are playing notes G#, D, F and B, so all those diminished chords are also being played. G# is the same as Ab. Hence,

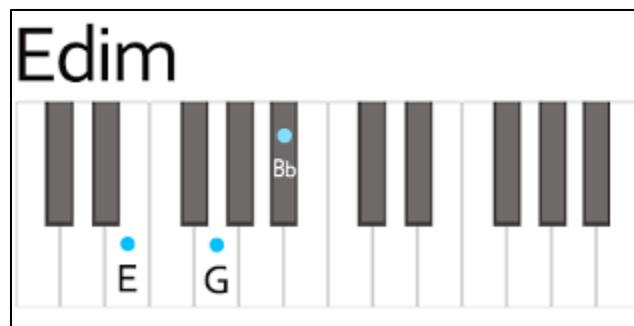
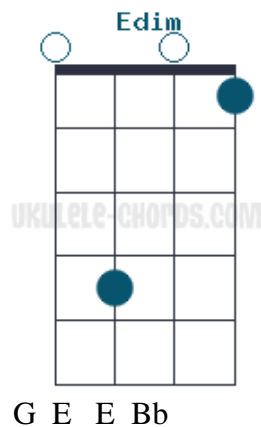
G#dim, Bdim, Abdim, Fdim and Ddim can all be played with:



Same finger pattern for:

Bdim
Abdim (G#dim)
Fdim
Ddim

There is one more fingering pattern for the diminished chords; this one involves only two fingers. The fingering and piano keyboard for Edim is shown below. All four strings are strummed, giving you G-E-E-Bb.



What happens if instead of pressing C string 4th fret you press C string 1st fret, as shown below? That will give a C# instead of an E. Then when you strum the 4 strings you will get G-C#-E-Bb, which is the Edim7 chord. So by pressing the first fret on the E and A strings, you have an Edim7 chord, not an Edim chord. Whenever you see Edim, you can play Edim7. That's because it is the same chord, with just an added C#.



Edim: E-G-Bb

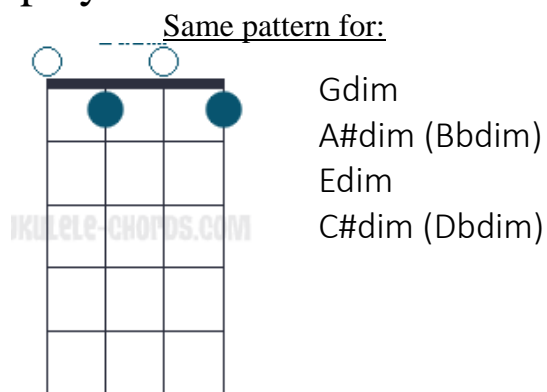
There are 3 half steps between E and G, and between G and Bb

Edim7: E-G-Bb-C#




There are 3 half steps between E and G, between G and Bb, and between Bb and C#

Now the last bit of good news. The exact same fingering for Edim7 can be used to play yet other group of diminished chords: With this fingering you are playing notes G, C#, E and Bb, so all those diminished chords are also being played. Bb is the same as A# and C# is the same as Db. Hence,

Gdim, A#dim, Bbdim, Dbdim, Edim and C#dim can all be played with:



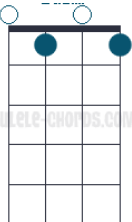
To summarize, there are only 3 fingerings you need to know for all the diminished chords. Here they are, screen copied from a recommended Youtube tutorial by “Ukulele Mike.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDi90xxX0zI>

Gdim		Gbdim
A#dim		Cdim
Bbdim	G#dim	F#dim
Dbdim	Bdim	Adim
Edim	Abdim	D#dim
C#dim	Fdim	Ebdim
		

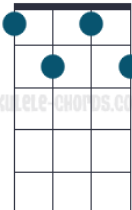
8:13 / 9:54

The DIMINISHED CHORD - EXPLAINED by "UKULELE MIKE"

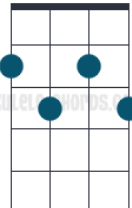
Keep in mind that with the fingerings shown, you are really playing diminished 7th chords. Here are the 3 diminished chord patterns, along with the chords each pattern can be used for. The actual chord being played for each finger pattern is shown in parentheses; note that *all* of the *actual* chords are diminished 7 chords. Since diminished 7 chords are tonally close to regular diminished chords, this fingering works.



Gdim (**Gdim7**)
A#dim (**A#dim7**)
Bbdim (**Bbdim7**)
Dbdim (**Dbdim7**)
Edim (**Edim7**)
C#dim (**C#dim7**)



G#dim (**G#dim7**)
Bdim (**Bbdim7**)
Abdim (**Abdim7**)
Fdim (**Fdim7**)
Ddim (**Ddim7**)



Gbdim (**Gbdim7**)
Cdim (**Cdim7**)
F#dim (**F#dim7**)
Adim (**Adim7**)
D#dim (**D#dim7**)
Ebdim (**Ebdim7**)

APPENDIX F: SUSPENDED CHORDS

One problem in uke-dom, for beginners, is the not-infrequent appearance of unusual or simply unknown chords. Diminished and Augmented chords certainly fall under that description, and I devoted the previous appendix to those two types.

Now we come to suspended chords, the subject of this appendix. But there are other categories as well: sixth, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth chords, and still other categories you've probably never heard of (e.g., "Minor, Major 7th"). Most commercial chord charts run around 100 chords. Hal Leonard's *Ukulele Chord Finder* book has over a 1000 chords (over 300 different ones, with 3 examples of each).

For the novice, this is just overwhelming. As has been repeatedly emphasized, beginning players should concentrate on only about 2 dozen chords (see Appendix D). Learn those well and you can play thousands of songs. Let the pros and experienced musicians worry about all the others.

DEFINITION

In a suspended chord (abbreviated "Sus") the major or minor third is omitted, and replaced with either a perfect fourth (making a Sus4) or a major second (making a Sus2). In popular music the Sus4 is much more common than Sus2.

What is their purpose? According to Wikipedia, "The lack of a minor or a major third in the chord creates an open sound, while the dissonance between the fourth and fifth or second and root creates tension." According to *Ukulele for Dummies* (page 179), in rock music "suspended chords are often used to build tension. [They] don't have the note that makes them major or minor. This gives them an incomplete sound which makes the listener crave for the sound to be resolved."

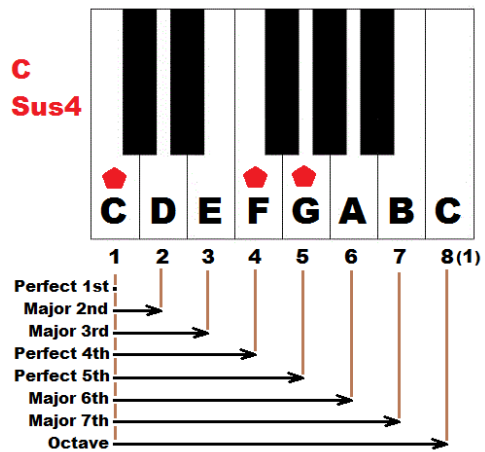
To better understand suspended chords I will use intervals shown on the keyboard; these excellent keyboard figures are from <http://www.piano-keyboard-guide.com/suspended-chords.html>.

The distance between any two keys is an interval. The name of the interval is based on the number of half steps between two keys. This is very basic music theory, and essential to understand the differences between major, minor and suspended chords. Thus, for example, when there are:

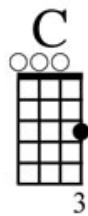
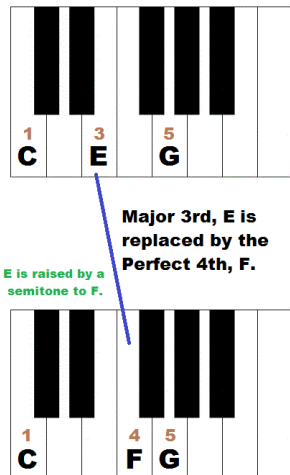
- 2 half steps between keys, the interval is called a major 2nd.
- 4 half steps between keys, the interval is called a major 3rd.
- 5 half steps between keys, the interval is called a perfect 4th.
- 7 half steps between keys, the interval is called a perfect 5th.
- 12 half steps between adjacent keys, the interval is an octave.

Sus 4 chords

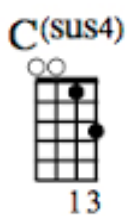
To change a major chord to a suspended 4 chord, the major third (4 half steps up) is replaced with a perfect fourth (5 half steps up). Below is shown the change for C major.



Major Chord
Changed To Sus4



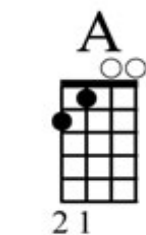
G-C-E-C



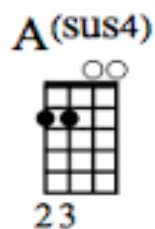
G-C-F-C

In Csus4, the major third (E) is replaced by F, which is a perfect fourth above C.

More Suspended Chord Examples

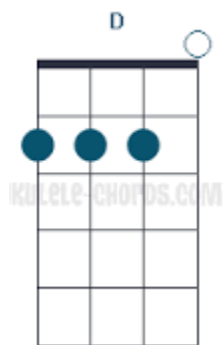


A C# E A

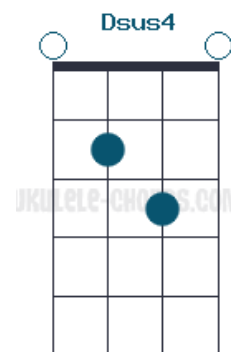


A D E A

In Asus4, the major third (C#) is replaced by D, which is a perfect 4th above A.

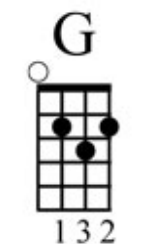


A D F# A

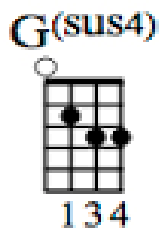


G D G A

In Dsus4, the major third (F#) is replaced by G, which is a perfect 4th above D.

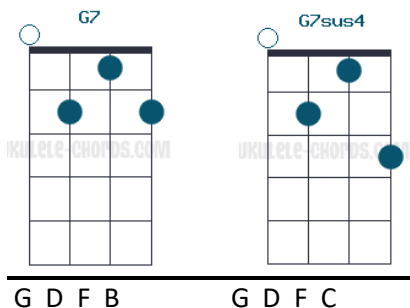


G D G B



G D G C

In Gsus4, the major third (B) is replaced by C, which is a perfect 4th above G.



G D F B

G D F C

In G7sus4, the major third (B) is replaced by C, which is a perfect 4th above G.

Below is ukulele sheet music showing use of Dsus4 chords (from <http://www.sheetmusicdirect.us/sheetmusic/song/1000181304/closing-time?redirect=1>).

Closing Time

Words and Music by Dan Wilson



Verse

Moderately slow Rock

1. Clos - ing time; — o - pen all the doors — and let —
2. See additional lyrics

— you out in - to the world. —

Clos - ing time; — turn all of the lights — on o - ver

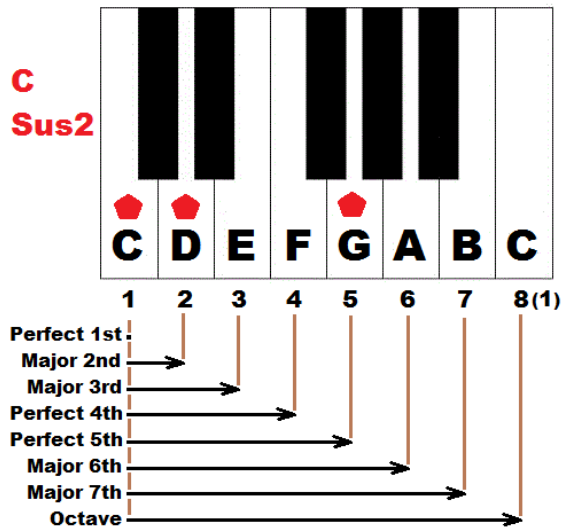
ev - 'ry boy and ev - er - y girl. —

Clos - ing time; — one last call for al - co - hol, — so

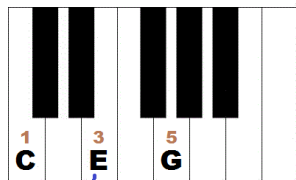
©1998 WB MUSIC CORP. and SEMIDELICIOUS MUSIC
All Rights Administered by WB MUSIC CORP.
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission

Sus2 chords

Sus2 chords are rarely seen in uke song sheets. To change a major chord to a suspended 2 chord, the major 3rd is omitted and replaced with a major second. Below is shown the change for C major.

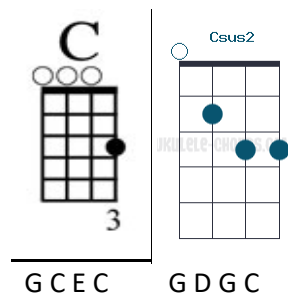


Major Chord **Changed To Sus2**



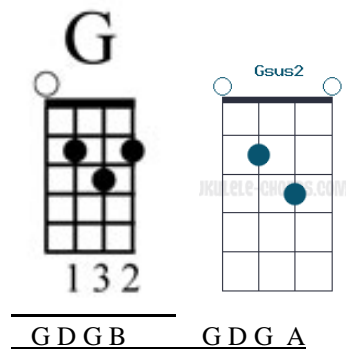
Major 3rd, E is replaced by the Major 2nd, D.

E is lowered by a whole tone to D.



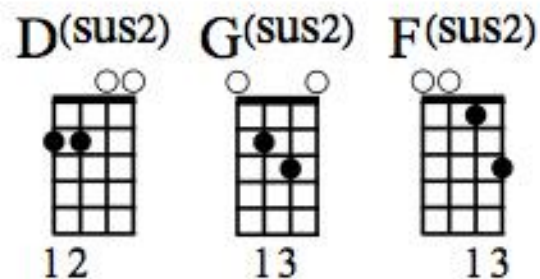
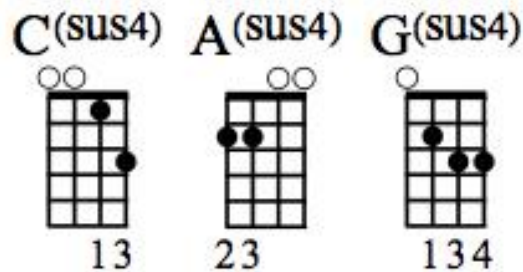
In Csus2, the major third (E) is replaced by D, which is a major 2nd above C.

Here is the change for G major to Gsus2. Again, the major third (B) is omitted and replaced with a major second (A).



Common finger patterns for some Sus4 and Sus2 chords

Below are uke chord charts for three Suspended 4 chords (C, A and G) and three Suspended 2 chords (taken from *Ukulele for Dummies*). Note that Csus4 is the same as Fsus2, and Asus4 is the same as Dsus2



APPENDIX G: HOW TO USE THE UKULELE CAPO – BASIC THEORY

By Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com



- 1) Where you put the capo is the new nut.
- 2) Open strings (without the capo) are G-C-E-A. If the capo is put on first fret, then the next fret up from the capo (the new nut) is $\frac{1}{2}$ semitone higher. Thus the plucked notes on the second fret (with capo on the 1st fret) become G \sharp -C \sharp -F-A \sharp .
- 3) If the capo is put on the 2nd fret, then the next fret up from the capo – the 3rd fret -- is one full note higher than the open strings. In this case the third fret has the following notes: A-D-F \sharp -B.
- 4) Let's say your music for a song is in the key of C, with the 1-4-5 chord progression C-F-G. The jam session leader announces: "We'll play it in D." What to do? Answer: place the capo on the 2nd fret, which is one full tone (two half-tones) higher, so that the key of C on your open uke now becomes the key of D. Then the same finger patterns in relation to the capo (the new "nut") give the following chords.

1-4-5 progression for C is C-F-G

Open uke, no capo

C chord fingering = G-C-E-C = C chord

F chord fingering = A-C-F-A = F chord

G chord fingering = G-D-G-B = G chord

1-4-5 progression for D is D-G-A

Capo on 2nd fret (= key of D)

C chord fingering = A-D-F \sharp -D = D chord

F chord fingering = B-D-G-B = G chord

G chord fingering = A-E-A-C \sharp = A chord

Thus, with the capo on the second fret, you can now play the chords as written on your sheet music for the key of C, but they will come out in the key of D.

- 5) What does it mean to play the chords as written on your music? It means to play the chords in your key in the exact same finger position *in relation to the capo* as you would play them in relation to the nut without the capo. This point is seldom made clear, so it bears repeating:

Play the chords on your music in the exact same position *in relation to the capo* as you would play them in relation to the nut without the capo.

- 6) Another example. If you're in a jam session, and your music for a song is in G, what to do if the leader announces the song will be played in key of A? Answer: A is two half steps up from G, so place the capo two frets up.

1-4-5 progression for G is G-C-D

Open uke, no capo

G chord fingering = G-D-G-B = G chord

C chord fingering = G-C-E-C = C chord

D chord fingering = A-D-F#-A = D chord

1-4-5 progression for A is A-D-E

Capo on 2nd fret (= key of A)

G chord fingering = A-E-A-C# = A chord

C chord fingering = A-D-F#-D = D chord

D chord fingering = B-E-G#-B = E chord

- 7) What if the conversion of one key to another is too high up the fret board for the capo to be practical? Then you can either sit out the song, or transpose the chords in your head. For example, your music is in D and the jam leader announces it will be played in C, which is 10 half tones or frets up the fretboard. It is impractical to use a capo that high up. However, accomplished musicians can transpose on the fly.

<u>Chord</u>	<u>Key of D</u>	<u>Key of C</u>
I	D	C
IV	G	F
V	A	G

Here is another example where the capo is impractical on the uke. Your music is in C and the group leader announces the song will be played in G, which is 7 frets or half tones up. You can either sit out the song or transpose the chords in your head.

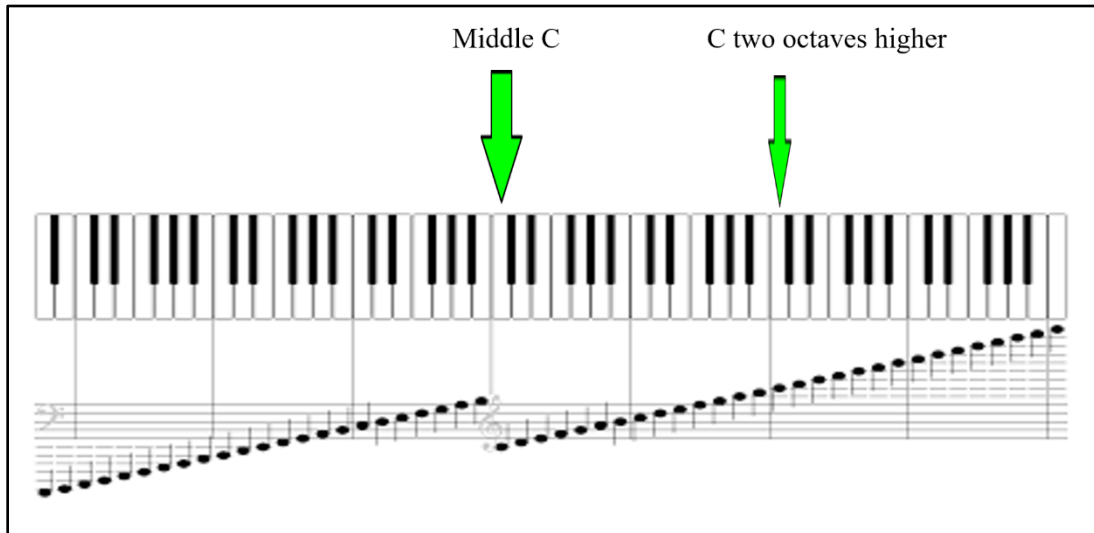
<u>Chord</u>	<u>Key of C</u>	<u>Key of G</u>
I	C	G
IV	F	C
V	G	D

- 8) A general rule is that you place the capo the number of steps up from your key to the new key you want to play in, as long as it's not too high up the fret board (some say beyond the 5th fret is too high). The following table shows some of the possibilities.

<u>Your key</u>	<u>Key you want</u>	<u>Place the capo on:</u>
C	D	2 nd fret
C	E	4 th fret
D	E	2 nd fret
D	F	3 rd fret
F	G	2 nd fret
F	A	4 th fret
G	A	2 nd fret
G	C	5 th fret
Etc.		

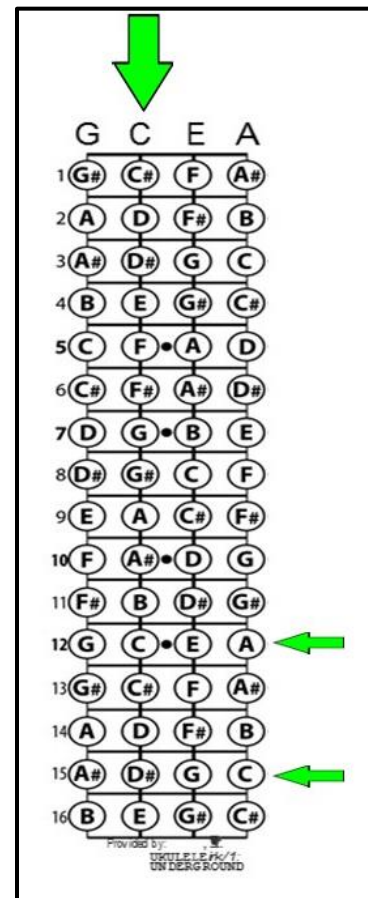
APPENDIX H: RANGE OF THE UKULELE AND THE LOW G STRING

Compared to most instruments, the ukulele has a narrow range. Basically, it is about two octaves, from middle C to the C note two octaves above middle C, shown on the piano keyboard below. The notes of these two C's as they appear on the treble clef are directly below the piano keys.



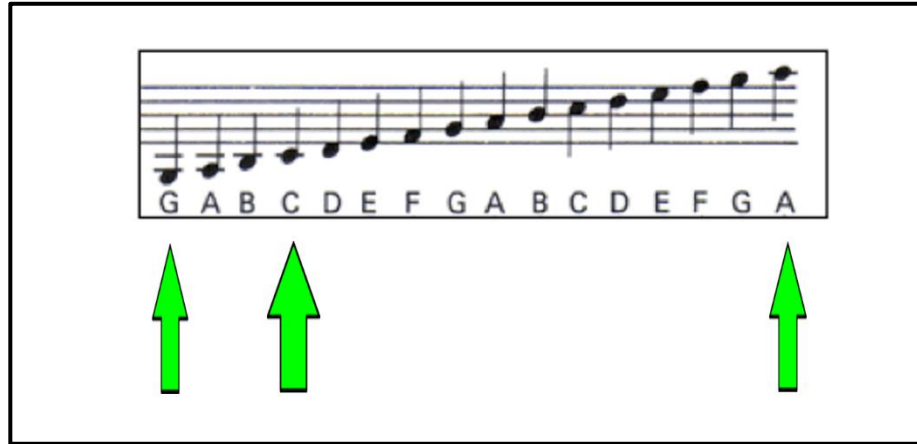
On the tenor uke, this is a range from the open C string to C played on the A string at the 15th fret (see fret board figure). You can go higher, but that would be extremely unlikely, especially for non-pros. As a practical matter, there is unlikely to be any song you will play that requires a note higher than the “A” at the 12th fret.

So in summary, on a standard-tuned (G-C-E-A) uke, middle C is played by plucking the open C string. C two octaves higher than middle C is played by pressing the A string at the 15th fret and plucking the A string. The A note just below this high C is played by pressing the A string at the 12th fret and plucking the A string.

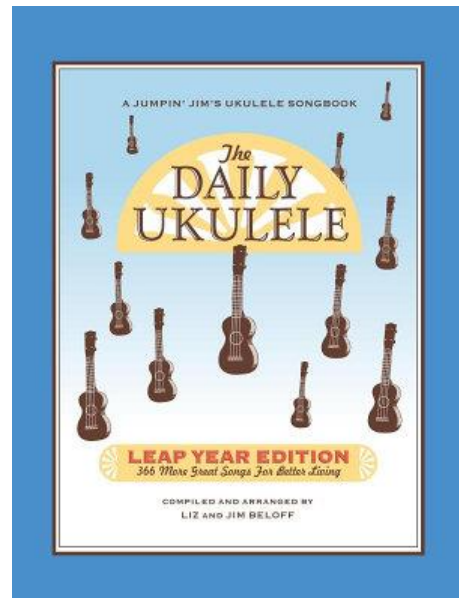
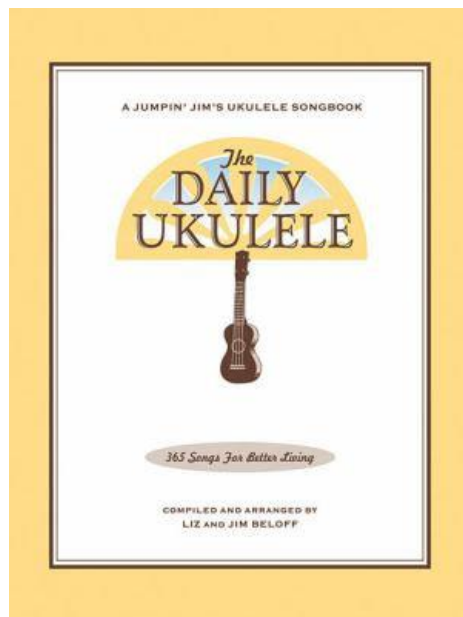


Middle C (Open C string)

The treble staff below shows the range of notes from G below middle C (if the uke has a low G string) to the A played at the 12th fret (thin arrows). Middle C is shown by the thick arrow.



The standard-tuned uke does not go lower than middle C. What many uke players, including beginners, often want is to go lower than middle C, to play the low G shown on the staff. This ability opens up a whole host of new songs by which you can the melody. About a quarter of the songs in the two Beloff song books have melody notes below middle C.



To play the low G you have to switch out the regular “high G” string for a thicker “low G” string. The low G string is usually made of steel, like a guitar string, or some proprietary synthetic material that is thicker than the typical nylon strings of the standard-tuned uke. The string is sold commercially, for just a few dollars. Several companies make them, for all three sizes of uke. Below is the packaging for 3 brands. If you are adept you can switch the string yourself, though beginners should probably have it done professionally.

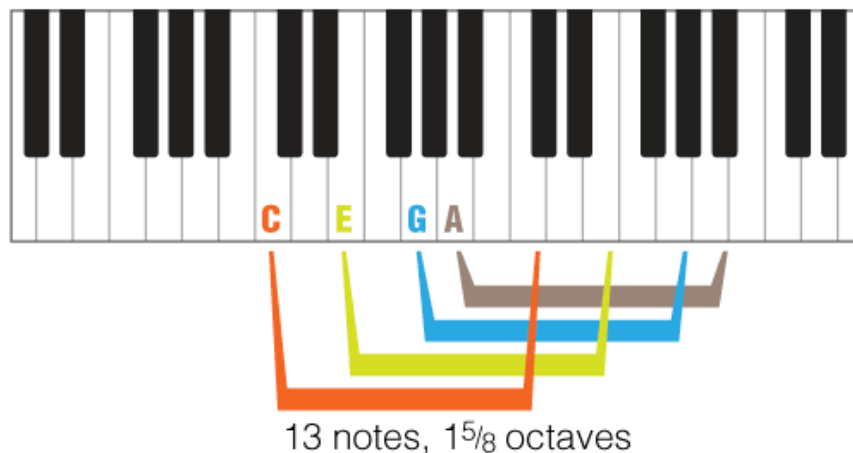


With a low G string you then have the following four “open strings” on your uke.

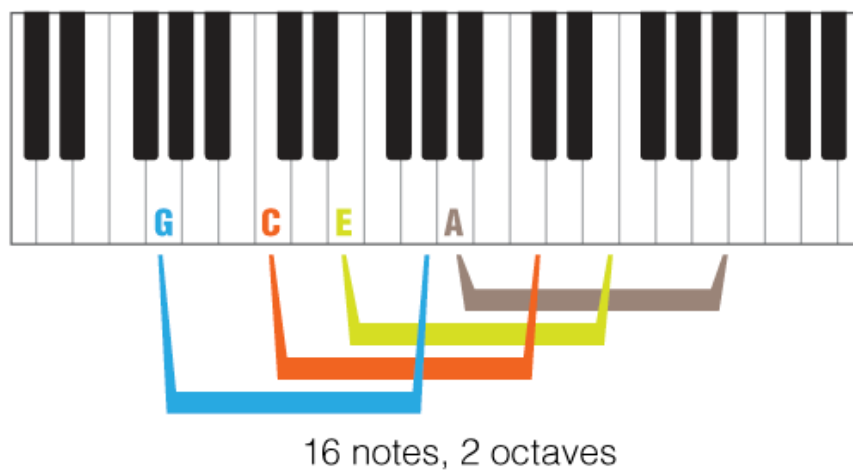


The following two diagrams, from “Ukulele Mike” nicely show the difference between standard G-C-E-A tuning and low G tuning.
 (<https://allthingsukulele.com/2013/10/15/low-g-high-g-the-discussion-goes-on/>)

Standard “Reentrant” Ukulele Tuning
high-G C E A



Low-G Ukulele Tuning
low-G C E A



The standard G is known as re-entrant tuning, because the G is not the lowest note, but “re-enters” the sequence after the E (from low to high: C-E-G-A). With low G the notes go in sequence, from low to high: G-C-E-A. These diagrams also show A as the highest note, but as already indicated, you can go higher on the fretboard (though you should never need (or want) to.)

Music with low G

The following song, scored for ukulele with low G, plays notes ranging from D above middle C to low G. You could not play this song (as written) on a standard tuned ukulele. From <http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/>

Copyrighted Material

Love Story

Words and Music by Taylor Swift

First note

Verse
Moderately

1. We were both young when I first saw — you. I

close my eyes — and the flash-back starts. — I'm stand - in' there

on a bal - co - ny in sum - mer air.

Verse

2. See the lights, — see the par - ty, the ball — gowns,
(3.) I sneak out — to the gar - den to see — you.

See you make — your way through the crowd — and say hel - lo,
We keep quiet — 'cause we're dead if they knew. So, close your eyes,

APPENDIX I: BEYOND THE BASICS: CHUNKING, HAMMER-ON & OTHER TECHNIQUES

There are many ways of playing the uke besides basic strumming and playing the melody notes. I call these “Beyond the Basics,” because they are techniques we don’t need, and shouldn’t bother with, unless and until we are more advanced in our playing. I include them in this syllabus for two reasons. First, you will likely hear about them or see one or more performed, and wonder just what the technique is. Second, you might find one or two of them interesting enough to begin practicing, and adding to your repertoire.

I will cover these playing techniques in alphabetical order, listing web site URLs for demos. Note that these are just a few of the many advanced uke techniques you can learn. For a comprehensive list, see <http://ukulelehunt.com/2010/02/24/advanced-ukulele-lessons/>.

Chunking (also called Chucking or Choking)

A percussive technique. Chunking is used to add a percussive sound to your strum. Stuart Fuchs says it’s a way of making your uke into a snare drum. To chunk, strum down using three or four fingers of your right hand, then immediately dampen the strings with the side of your thumb (while your thumb is pointed towards the ground).

Demos for Chunking on Uke

Stuart Fuchs



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOBXx_u3ukE

Others

<http://ukuleleunderground.com/2008/08/uke-minutes-23-chunking/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5yFj1RnRvQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plDhR5-epo0>

Claw Hammer

Claw hammer is a banjo technique that can also be used with the ukulele, and is the most difficult of all the techniques listed in this section. Anyone who can do this well is probably a banjo player or a uke pro. There are several good Youtube videos of this technique. The ones by Berean and Hefner are in several parts. Lil Rev has a much shorter video that I recommend for beginners. The basic rhythm is BUM DIT-TY, broken down into three separate actions. Here is the sequence as explained by Lil Rev, with a picture from Part 2 of the Berean videos.

BUM

Right hand in claw shape, index finger plucks a string, e.g. the C string (other players use the middle finger)

DIT

Then the back of the nail of your index finger strums the strings C, E, A (don't bring your thumb down during this movement)



TY

The thumb presses and releases the G string to create a popping sound

Demos for Claw Hammer on Uke

Lil Rev



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxVtV2wojyo>

Berean

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYgnWIK887k>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWm2sC9iIKI>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVhIBAWW-DI>

Guido Heisek

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgkR7C2lu0Y>

Richard Hefner: 1st of 4 on videos on claw hammer, by former banjo player

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zADviWdR7o>

Ululeletim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5I02i9EWZ8Q>

Fingerpicking

Fingerpicking – plucking individual strings instead of strumming them – was originally a paragraph in this Appendix on Other Techniques. However, the more I looked into it, the more I realized that it is not only a wide-ranging technique, with several methodologies, but also vital to many players who want to go beyond simply strumming their instrument. So I have now expanded Fingerpicking into its own section, Appendix J.

Finger Roll

Aldrine Guerrero demonstrates several finger rolls: 3-finger, 5-finger, 8-finger and 10-finger. Basically a roll is where you use several fingers to strum the strings, rather than just one finger.

Demos for Finger Roll on Uke:

Aldrine Geurrero



<http://ukuleleunderground.com/courses/advanced-strumming-techniques/> (3-, 8- and 10-finger rolls)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP9yNREXn4s> (5-finger roll)

Hammer-on & Pull-off

These two different techniques are usually taught together.

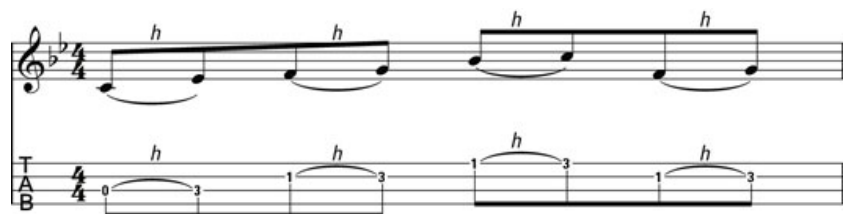
The hammer-on allows you go from a lower note to a higher note without re-plucking a string. Hammer on: lower → higher note

1. Pluck the string as usual.
2. Leave the string ringing while you quickly bring a finger down on the string (or back down on the string if it's fretted). Try to make most of the hammering movement come from the knuckle — not your wrist — and land in the usual fretting position just behind the fret wire. Think of a hammer; you are bringing your finger down hard on the string so you should hear the string still ringing without having to pick it.

The following is a measure of music from the *Ukulele for Dummies* web site.

<http://www.dummies.com/art-center/music/ukulele/how-to-play-hammer-on-notes-on-your-ukulele/>

This measure consists of 8 eighth notes in 4/4 time, and is shown in both standard musical notation and uke tablature. (Note that the key is Bb minor, with a Bb and an Eb.)



- The first plucked note is middle C, the open C string. As soon as C is plucked, come down hard on the C string at the 3rd fret with your finger; that action will elicit the note Eb (or D#). Use your tuner to see this change.

- The second plucked note is an F. As soon as that note is plucked, come down hard on the E string at the 3rd fret with your finger; that action will elicit a G. Use your tuner to see this change.
- The third plucked note is a B \flat . As soon as that note is plucked, come down hard on the A string at the 3rd fret with your finger; that action will elicit a C above middle C. Use your tuner to see this change.
- The fourth plucked note is again an F. Same action as the 2nd plucked note. Use your tuner to see this change.

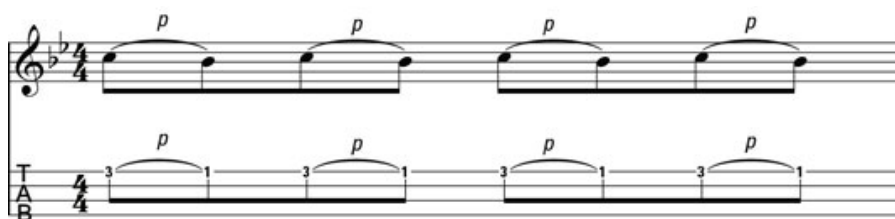
Pull-off

The pull-off is opposite of the hammer-on. This technique allows you go to from a higher note to a lower note without re-plucking a string on your uke.

Pull-off: higher → lower note

The following figure, from *Ukulele for Dummies*, shows a single measure of music with 8 eighth notes, in both standard musical notation and tablature. (Again, note that the key is B \flat minor, with a B \flat and an E \flat .)

<http://www.dummies.com/art-center/music/ukulele/how-to-play-pull-off-notes-on-your-ukulele/>



- Put your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the A string and your index finger on the 1st fret of the A string. Then pluck the A string, which will give C above middle C (pressing the 1st fret has no effect when the 3rd fret is also pressed).
- As soon as that C note is plucked, pull your ring finger down slightly and release it while your index finger remains on the 1st fret. This “pulling off” the A string will elicit a B \flat note, without having to pluck the A string again. Use your tuner to see this change.
- Repeat the above two steps for the next three pull-offs.

Hammer-on and pull-off Demos on Uke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofGc2DErV2c>

<http://ukuleleunderground.com/2008/07/uke-minutes-19-pull-offs-and-hammer-pull-combos/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6yCsCNRMW0>

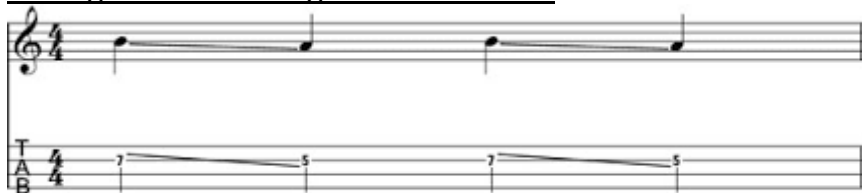
Slide

Slide is the technique of moving from one fretted note to another without lifting your finger. To perform a slide, first play a note in the normal way, by pressing on a fret and plucking or picking that string. While the note is still ringing, slide the fretting finger to the fret indicated for the second note, all the while pressing down on the string. Do not lift your finger or the second note will die. The second note will ring without having to pick it.

There are several ways of showing slides in notation. The simplest, and one I prefer, is from *Ukulele for Dummies*.

<http://www.dummies.com/art-center/music/ukulele/how-to-slide-notes-on-your-ukulele/>

Sliding down: from higher to lower note



The above figure shows two identical slides, in both the treble clef for standard musical notation and in tablature. In each, you have your finger on the E string, 7th fret. Pluck the E string to play a B (check with your tuner). After that note is plucked, you slide the finger **down** the E string (toward the nut) and stop on the 5th fret, to elicit an A.

Sliding up: from lower to higher note



The above figure shows two identical slides, in both the treble clef for standard musical notation, and in tablature. In each, you have your finger on the E string, 5th fret. Pluck the E string to play an A (check with your tuner). After that note is plucked, you slide the finger **up** the E string (toward the sound hole) and stop on the 7th fret, to elicit a B.

Slide Demos on Uke

Good videos of uke slides are hard to find. Several of the videos show slides using a plastic or metal slider, which covers all 4 strings at once, such as this one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATUyKlQpC4k>

A reasonable demo showing the single finger technique is
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwQhIP9h0Es>

Tremolo

Tremolo is a rapid back and forth motion with one or more fingers.

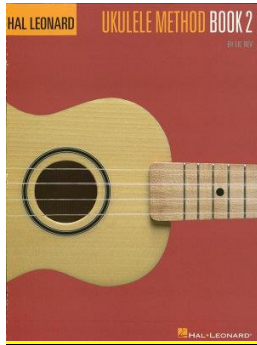
Demo videos of the tremolo on uke.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B82XbasUA-E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBxTUO5a8fg>

Triplets

Triplets in the uke is a form of strumming, with three strums or notes occupying the space of one or two beats. Lil Rev, in his *Ukulele Method, Book 2*, gives an excellent description.



Say:	TRIP	a	let
Strum:	DOWN	DOWN	UP
Finger:	1 st	Thumb	1 st
Count:	1	2	3
Accent:	hard	soft	soft

Lil Rev demonstrates triplets at:

<http://anyonemusic.blogspot.com/2008/06/ukulele-lesson-29-triplet-strums.html>

(Other triplet videos are shown on this web site as well.)

Basically, a triplet strum plays three brushes across the strings when the musical notation is typically played with the same number of strums per note. Thus a piece of music in 4/4 time that you might play with 4 down strums, could also be played with a triplet thrown in:

4/4	D	D	D	D
With triplet:	D	D-D-U	D	D

Similarly, a piece of music in 4/4 time that you might play with 8 strums could also be played by substituting a triplet for one of the down-up strums:

4/4	D-U	D-U	D-U	D-U
With triplet:	D	D-D-U	D	D

Note also that the down-down-up sequence can vary. Aldrine Guererro demonstrates a down-up-down triplet pattern (<http://ukuleleunderground.com/2010/02/uke-minutes-79-triplets/>).

4/4	D	D	D	D
With triplet:	D	D-U-D	D	D

The basic idea is to replace one or two strums with three quick strums.

In musical notation triplets are typically indicated by showing three notes as replacing one or two notes; below are two examples.



APPENDIX J: FINGERPICKING

This Appendix assumes some familiarity with uke tablature and notes of the fretboard. If not familiar with these I recommend first reviewing Section 9: Playing Melody on the Ukulele.

Fingerpicking – plucking individual strings instead of strumming them – is not really for beginners, so why this Appendix? Because it’s the “next step,” a technique we should



Tim Robinson

all consider if we want something more than just strumming chords. A very good uke player and teacher I know, Tim Robinson, attends weekly uke sessions in The Villages, Fl, where they play the same songs over and over. While we beginners find it a challenge to make the chord changes and keep the rhythm, Tim can do that in his sleep. “Why do you keep coming?” I once asked him. “Don’t you get bored?”

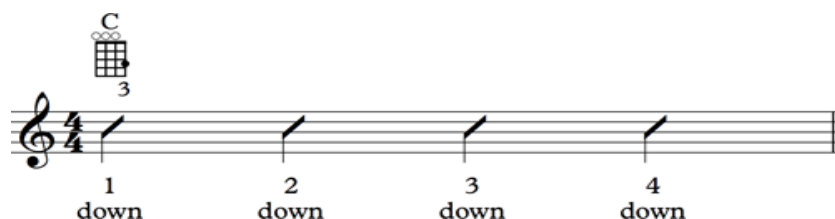
His answer was illuminating. “I practice finger picking. It’s a challenge each time.” So at the next session I watched him play. While everyone else was strumming a C or F or G7 chord to over-played songs, he was picking the strings that make up these chords. He doesn’t care that the songs have been played a thousand times; for him, each session is a challenge to his fingerpicking skills.

Below is the chorus of *You Are My Sunshine*, showing chords C, D and G. The beginner may strum them with the usual down-down pattern, or even perhaps with a down-up pattern – all fairly straightforward. Take chord C, for example.

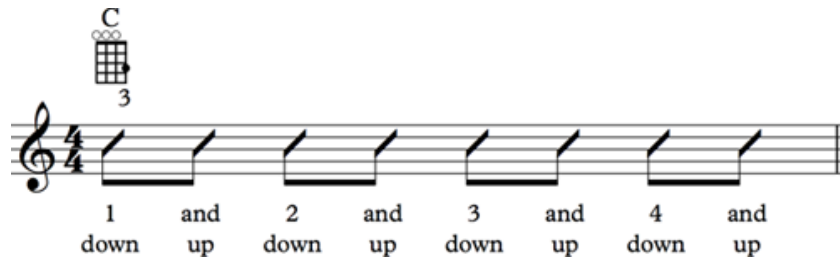
CHORUS:

 G G
You are my sunshine my only sunshine
 C G
You make me happy when skies are gray
 C G
You'll never know dear how much I love you
 G D G
Please don't take my sunshine away

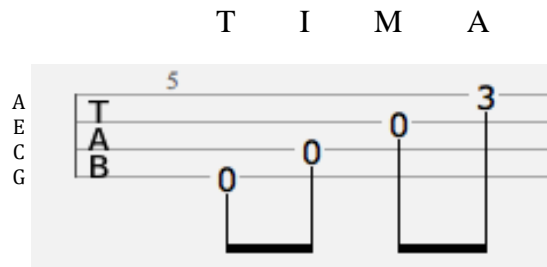
You can strum like this:



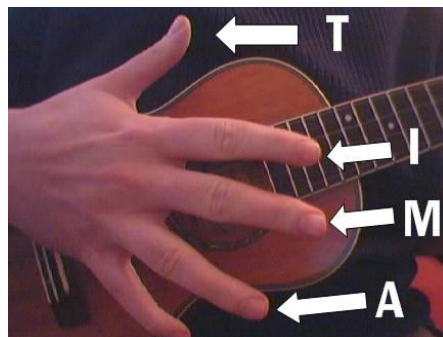
Or like this:



Most beginners will likely strum one of these two ways. But if you've strummed this simple chord week after week, and feel the need for some variety, you could try to "pick" the notes of the chord. This means playing the notes of the chord one string at a time, what musicians call an "arpeggio." Below is the tablature for picking notes of the C chord (the "5" means this is the fifth measure of the song it came from). Note that the strings are shown opposite the way they appear in the picture of the hand over the ukulele. When we play the uke, the G string is on top and the A string is on bottom. In finger picking tablature, it is reversed: the A string is on top and G string is on bottom.



In this particular example, from ukulelehunt.com, the fingers are labeled as follows.



T = Thumb; plucks the open G string
 I = Index Finger; plucks the open C string
 M = Middle Finger; plucks the open E string
 A = Ring Finger; plucks the A string that is pressed at the 3rd fret (in this finger nomenclature A is for annular, another name for ring finger); the resulting note will be a C

Fingerpicking in perspective

The following points put fingerpicking in perspective for uke beginners.

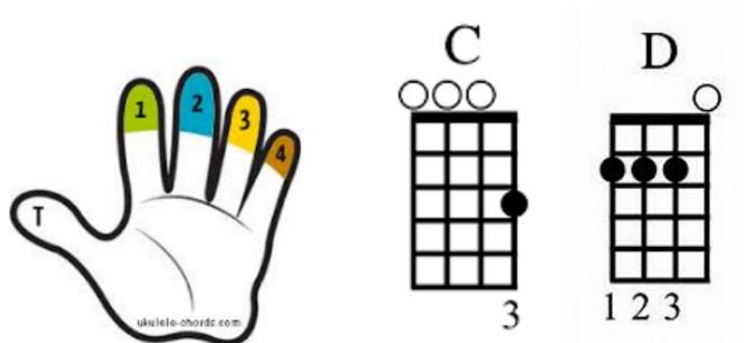
- All beginning uke players start with basic strumming (down only, or down-up) and basic chords (e.g., C, F and G7). Their goal is to finger the proper chords while producing a strum pattern that is in rhythm with the singer and/or other players. With time, beginners typically learn more complex chords (such as B \flat and Em) and may try a variety of strum patterns, such as calypso and triplets.
- Once the new player has learned about 20-25 chords, and how to strum a few of the patterns described in this syllabus, he or she can be considered beyond “beginner” level.
- As a “next step,” the beyond-beginner has several options:
 - learn more chords and strum patterns
 - learn some of the advanced techniques discussed in Appendix I (e.g., chunking, hammer-on and hammer-off, slides)
 - learn to play individual notes.

Of course you are free to pursue none, one, two, or all three of these options. IF YOU DECIDE TO CHOOSE ONE OF THEM, I recommend learning to play individual notes, i.e., fingerpicking. I think it will give ‘more bang for your buck’, i.e., greater return in enjoyment compared to other playing techniques you might pursue.

- This appendix is about playing individual notes, which is fingerpicking or fingerstyle playing. By picking individual notes instead of strumming, you can play:
 - a simple melody (which was reviewed in Section 9)
 - arpeggiated chords (notes of a chord one at a time)
 - “licks” and “riffs” (the terms are often used interchangeably to mean a short musical idea or section of a song).

Fingerpicking Nomenclature

Before continuing, I should point out the inconsistency between finger naming for picking chords vs. strumming chords. The finger nomenclature for strumming chords uses T for thumb and 1-4 for the other four fingers, as shown below, with examples for the C and D chords.



This finger nomenclature for chords is universal. Nomenclature for fingerpicking is *not* universal. Books and web sites use varying names. Sometimes the thumb is labeled “p” meaning “pulgar,” a Spanish word for thumb. Sometimes capital letters are used, sometimes lower case. In examples from the internet and books you will see these different labelings.

Finger	Fingerpicking	Chord Playing
Thumb	T, t, P, p	T
Index	I, i	1
Middle	M, m	2
Ring	A, a, R, r	3
Pinkie	Generally not used	4

Finger Picking – Which Fingers to Use?

As to which fingers to use for which strings, there are several methods and no standard. Some players pick the strings with just 2 fingers, some with 3, others with 4. Use whichever way you feel most comfortable with. However, I do recommend *you try to become reasonably comfortable with one method before starting to learn another.*

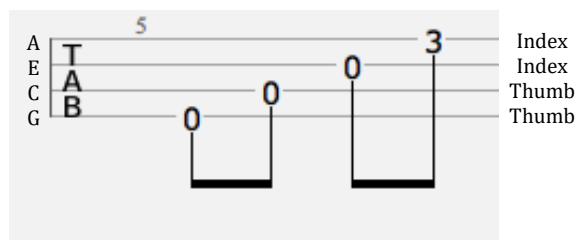
Beginners may want to start with just two fingers, the thumb and index finger. It is the simplest, and can be used to great effect.

TWO-FINGER METHOD

Thumb – for G and C string

Index – for E and A string

Here is the C chord plucked with just these two fingers.

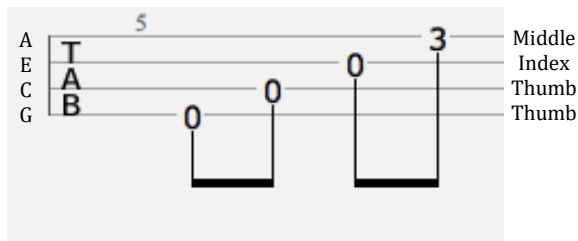


When you are comfortable and proficient with just two fingers, you can add the middle finger.

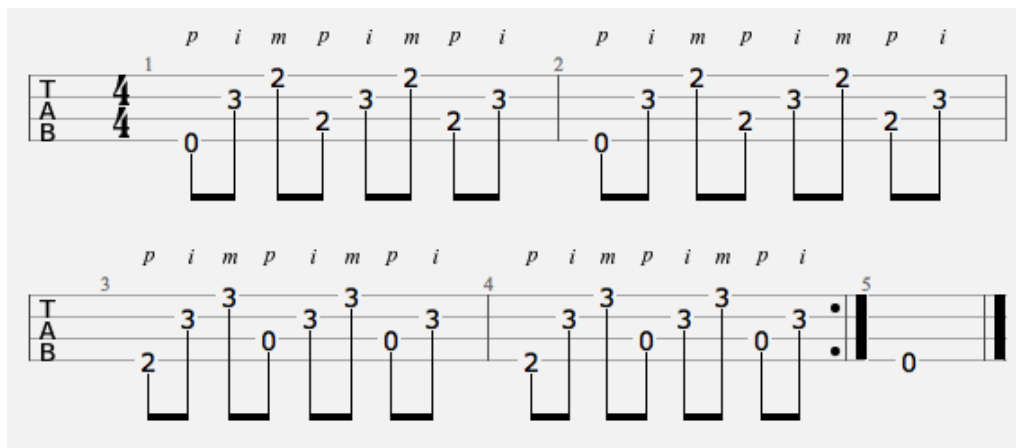
THREE-FINGER METHOD

Most uke musicians seem to prefer, and therefore recommend, the three-finger method, using thumb, index and middle fingers. Here is the C chord plucked with 3 fingers: thumb, index, and middle.

Thumb – for G and C string
Index – for E string
Middle – for A string



The following fingerpicking tablature for the 3-finger method is from Ukulele Hunt (p=thumb, i=index, m=middle). Go to this web site to hear the notes played.
<http://ukulelehunt.com/2013/09/25/thumb-and-two-fingers-picking/>



Another proponent of 3-finger picking is Richard Hefner, shown below, along with his three fingers in position. For his excellent tutorials see:
<http://www.ezfolk.com/uke/Tutorials/Fingerpicking/fingerpicking.html>.



Thumb – for G and C string
Index – for E string
Middle – for A string



Hefner writes:
 “Notice also in the picture that I usually rest my ring finger and pinkie on the surface of the ukulele just below the strings to anchor my hand and provide stability for the three fingers that are doing the picking. This 3-finger style of picking has been commonly used by fingerstyle guitarists such as Chet Atkins and many others as well as almost all

bluegrass banjo players. Of course the picking patterns have to be modified a bit because of the different number of strings on the uke.”

Hefner demonstrates 14 short fingerpicking examples at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RDR07Cmwpcsy0&v=UVET3VDpVD8>

Also recommended: [Hefner fingerpicking the chords to *San Francisco Bay Blues*, at:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_T94_fZcwE&list=RDR07Cmwpcsy0&index=15)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_T94_fZcwE&list=RDR07Cmwpcsy0&index=15

Brett McQueen is also a proponent of 3-finger fingerpicking, using thumb, index, and middle finger.



Brett McQueen

McQueen gives lots of examples of 3-finger picking; see

<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/ukulele-fingerpicking-nursery-rhymes/>.

I find most teachers prefer the 3-finger method. Sharrie George teaches uke in QuarantUNE (worldwide virtual music festival for dulcimer, uke and other instruments; see <https://www.virtualdulcimerfest.com/>). She is pictured here with her husband Guy George, who plays hammered dulcimer and pennywhistle, and also teaches during QuarantUNE (see <https://www.islandguymusic.com/>).



Guy and Sharrie George
Daytona Beach, FL

Sharrie teaches 3 basic finger-picking patterns, as shown below, first without chords, then with common chords. For example, Pattern #1 plays strings in the following order: G-C-E-A. You simply repeat this pattern with your right hand (for right-handed folks), using your left hand to finger the chords G and D7. Pattern #2 plays G-A-C-E; etc. They are all good and I recommend practicing all three.

Basic Finger-picking

Sharrie George

Pattern # 1

Pattern # 2

Pattern # 3

Pattern # 1

Pattern # 2

Pattern # 3

Basic Finger-picking is from:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52fa4e48e4b0847e7b07dcd4/t/60beb64c45f6cb6480566982/1623111244254/Sharrie+George+-+Ukulele+Finger-picking+Basics.pdf/>

FOUR-FINGER METHOD

In this method each of the four fingers (thumb, index, middle, ring) plays just one string each.

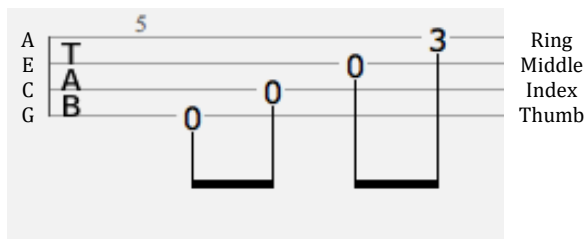
Thumb – G string

Index – C string

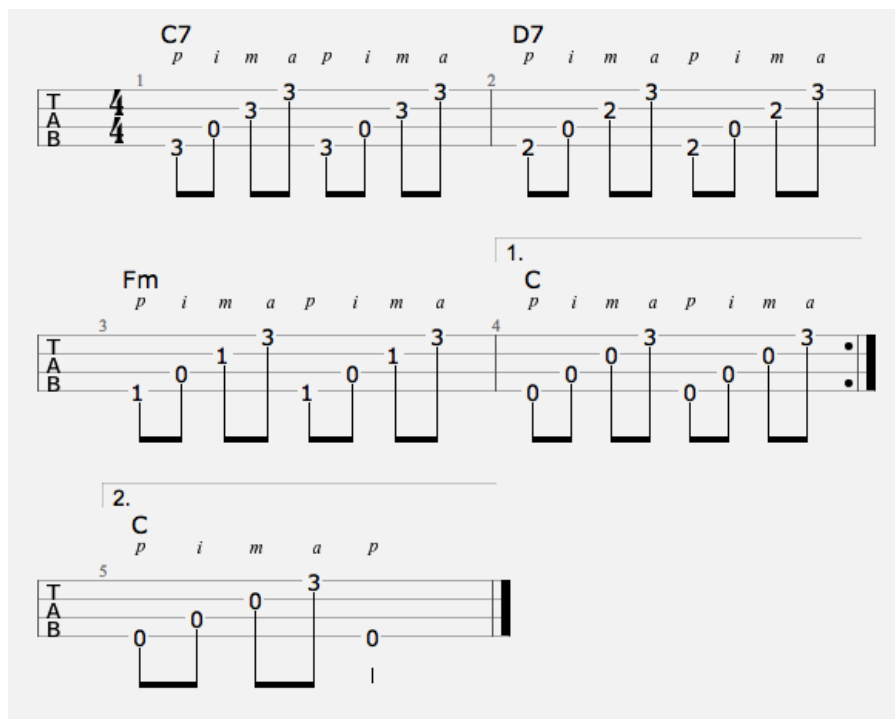
Middle – E string

Ring – A string

Here is the C chord using 4 fingers, followed by a picture of the 4-finger position from Ukulele Hunt.



Below is an example of tablature using the 4-finger method: p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), and a (ring). You can hear these notes played at <http://ukulelehunt.com/2013/09/25/one-finger-per-string-picking/>.



Additional 4-finger examples:

Gary Jules has a detailed, easy to follow video using 4 fingers to play chords Amin, G, C, D, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jblSJihIE4>

”RockClass101” demonstrates the 4-finger method at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIMonb6DOKc>

Websites and Books

This appendix is the tip of a giant iceberg of fingerpicking information. Fingerpicking the ukulele is a complex area, and one worth getting into, even if it’s only the basics as introduced here. There are numerous books and web sites with detailed information on fingerpicking. In addition to the websites already presented in this appendix, I also recommend checking out the following.

Cynthia Lin

<https://www.youtube.com/user/cynthialinmusic>

Dylan Laine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iaZg7SbseE>

One Music School

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq5Q0IsMn5Y&t=56s>

RockClass101

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycids42Zr1I>

Fingerpicking for beginners

<http://ukulelego.com/tips/ukulele-fingerpicking-for-beginners/>

Basic fingerpicking patterns

<http://ukulelehunt.com/2013/09/25/fingerpicking-patterns/>

14 short fingerpicking examples

<http://www.ezfolk.com/uke/Tutorials/Fingerpicking/fingerpicking.html>

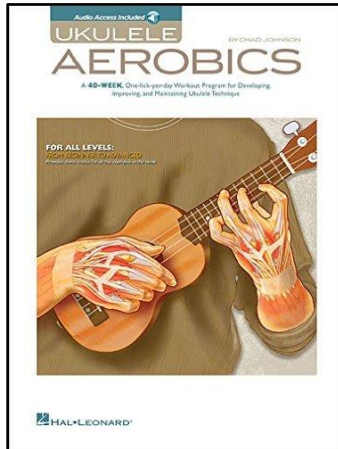
Fingerpicking on the C chord

http://www.poloniamusic.com/Ukulele_Fingerpicking_Free_Lesson.html

Blues fingerpicking

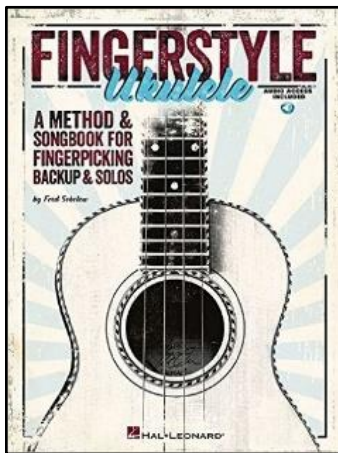
<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/ukulele-blues-fingerpicking-lesson-pattern-1/>

Books



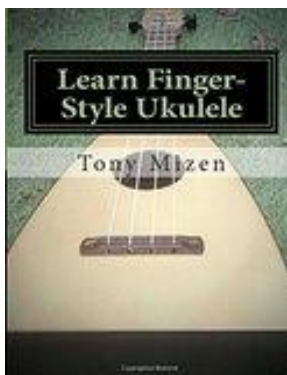
<https://www.amazon.com/Ukulele-Aerobics-Levels-Beginner-Advanced/dp/147681306X/>

Gives gives different exercises for each day of the week, over a period of 40 weeks. The categories of exercise include: chords (Monday); strumming (Tuesday); fingerstyle (Wednesday); scales (Thursday); legato, i.e., hammer-on, hammer-off (Friday); licks & riffs (Saturday); miscellaneous (Sunday).



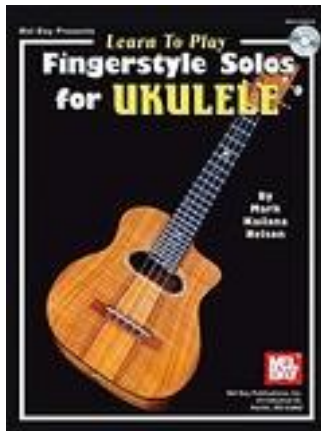
<https://www.amazon.com/Fingerstyle-Ukulele-Method-Songbook-Fingerpicking/dp/1458423115/>

The sample songs in this book come with online audio access. Covers several genres, including folk, jazz, blues and country.



<https://www.amazon.com/Learn-Finger-Style-Ukulele-Music-Theory/dp/150068144X/>

This is a self-published work from England, designed for rank beginners. It has a few proofreading errors, which I noted on the Amazon web site (under "Lawrence"), and which the author states he has correct. So now the book should get 4 stars.



https://www.amazon.com/Learn-Play-Fingerstyle-Solos-Ukulele-dp-0786687215/dp/0786687215/ref=dp_ob_title_bk

From the Amazon website: "Now intermediate players can learn to play lovely finger style solo arrangements of classic Hawaiian songs, folk songs, standards - even a few pieces from the classical guitar repertoire. The book offers 27 arrangements from around the world written in standard notation and tablature playable on any ukulele. Songs are grouped according to level of difficulty."

And one more...

The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain has been performing since the late 1980s, and has frequently toured the U.S. One of their signature pieces is the Ennio Morricone theme from *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly*, a 1966 Italian film starring



Clint Eastwood. The UOGB performance is beyond masterful. Watch this video for amazing fingerpicking (plus some whistling, yodeling and a whole lot more).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLgJ7pk0X-s&list=RDdKpzCCuHDVY&index=9>

Appendix K: 12-Bar Blues

12-bar blues is a specific chord progression that can be used in many songs. It is fairly easy to learn, and can be a great addition to your playing package. To put 12-bar blues in historical perspective, I'll quote Steve McQueen, from his highly recommended web site (which also shows him demonstrating 12-bar blues):

<http://www.ukuleletricks.com/12-bar-blues-on-ukulele/>.



"The blues has arguably been one of the most influential genres of music in the past century. The chants, spirituals, and songs of African-American slaves in the 19th century gave birth to the genre, while descendants of slaves carried their legacy into recorded form in the early 1900s.

"When people think of the blues, they typically think of a man with a raspy voice singing and playing along with a guitar. While this is a common expression of the blues, it's not unlikely that in the early to mid-20th century people would sing and play the blues on their ukulele too."

The 12-bar blues is made up of twelve bars or measures, with the following characteristics.

- Each measure gets four beats; if you are using down strums only, you will have 4 strums per measure: / / / /
- The commonest pattern (or chord progression) is I, IV, V. Thus if the music is in the key of C, the chord progression will be some variation of C, F, G. If the music is in the key of A, the chord progression will be A, D, E.
- Dominant chords can (and often do) substitute in the chord progression, to give I7, IV7, V7 (or C7, F7, G7 in the key of C; A7, D7, E7 in the key of A).
- Once you play the 12 bars, repeat the entire form.
- There are several variations within the I, IV, V progression. One of the commonest is:
 - I chord for 4 measures
 - IV chord for 2 measures
 - I chord for 2 measures
 - V chord for 2 measures
 - I chord for 2 measures

An example of this 12-bar progression from McQueen's web site is shown below, in the Key of A; note that he uses the dominant 7 chords: A7, D7, E7.

A7 A7 A7 A7
D7 D7 A7 A7
E7 E7 A7 A7

Another common variation of 12-bar blues, from McQueen's web site:

- I chord for 1 measure
- IV chord for 1 measure
- I chord for 2 measures
- IV chord for 2 measures
- I chord for 2 measures
- V chord for 1 measure
- IV chord for 1 measure
- I chord for 1 measure
- V chord for 1 measure

Tim Robinson (pictured below), who teaches ukulele in The Villages, Florida, has devised a useful chart to show the 12-bar blues chord progression *in several keys*.



For this chart Tim uses the following chord progression:

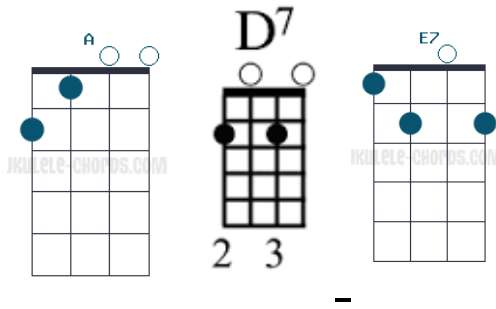
- I chord for 4 measures
- IV chord for 2 measures
- I chord for 2 measures
- V chord for 1 measure
- IV chord for 1 measure
- I chord for 2 measures

1 st Bar ////	2 nd Bar ////	3 rd Bar ////	4 th Bar ////
C D /	C D /	C D /	C D /
G A	G A	G A	G A
5 th Bar ////	6 th Bar ////	7 th Bar ////	8 th Bar ////
F G IV	F G IV	C D /	C D /
C D7	C D7	G A	G A
9 th Bar ////	10 th Bar ////	11 th Bar ////	12 th Bar ////
G7 A V	F G IV	C D /	C D /
D7 E7	C D7	G A	G A

To play the 12-bar blues in any of the keys shown, you simply follow the letter position in each box. For example, in Key of A (letter in right lower quadrant of each box):

A A A A
D7 D7 A A
E7 D7 A A

Note that this progression uses the A major chord, but instead of D major and E major chords, has the D7 (D dominant) and E7 (E dominant) chords. Shown below is the fingering for these chords (including the Hawaiian D7; see Section 7).

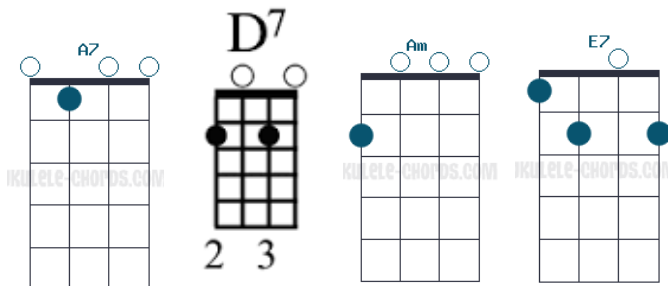


In fact, several chords can be substituted for the major chords C, D, E, F, G and A, as shown below.

C - C6, C7	F - F7,
D - D7, Am	G - G7
E - E7	A - A7, Am

Thus in the key of A, you could have the following chord progression for 12-bar blues.

A7 A7 A7 A7
D7 D7 Am Am
E7 D7 A7 A7



There are many examples of 12-bar blues for ukulele on the internet. Here are a few simple videos I recommend, plus two text references.



Aldrine Guerrero (2 minutes)
<http://ukuleleunderground.com/2009/06/uke-minutes-51-blues-ukulele-chords/>



Brett McQueen (8 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjP79KogUuY>



Ukulele Mike (5 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyXAAXVaRoU>



Jim D'Ville (4 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4uI3d4j03g>



John Curtis (13 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpliyo4dPsM>



**12 BAR BLUES FOR THE UKULELE
 IN THE KEY OF 'A'**

For a free syllabus devoted to 12-bar blues on the ukulele, see:
12 BAR BLUES FOR THE UKULELE IN THE KEY OF 'A'
<https://marklele.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/12-bar-blues-for-uke.pdf>



If you want to purchase an ebook devoted to the subject, see
How To Play Blues Ukulele
<http://howtoplayukulele.com/how-to-play-blues-ukulele/>

END OF UKE SYLLABUS