



Intermediate Ukulele

What is your individual next step?

This short book is a summary of intermediate and advancing skills that will allow you to determine what steps you want to take next in your journey with the ukulele.



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When is a “Beginner” no longer a beginner?

A “Beginner” is no longer a beginner if they can play most of the common root position chords on their ukulele, strum or pick various patterns, and sing and play at the same time. This also means that they are not substituting “easier” chords for a more difficult chord (e.g. playing E7 instead of E).

Can you play all of the chords in the Proficiency Test on Uncle Rod Higuchi’s ‘Ukulele Boot Camp? <https://ukulelebootcamp.weebly.com/>. Play the following at 72bpm, one strum on each chord:

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

The image displays the musical notation for the Proficiency Test chords, organized into three systems. Each system includes guitar-style chord diagrams, standard notation, and fretboard diagrams for ukulele.

System 1: C Am F G7 C F C A7 D Bm G A7 D G D C7

System 2: F Dm Bb C7 F Bb F D7 G Em G D7 G C G E7

System 3: A F#m D E7 A D A

If a player can play that chord sequence in time, that means they are no longer a beginner. That means it is time for them to ask, “**What’s next on my ukulele journey?**”

Some things to consider for that next part of the journey:

- **Personal Goals**
 - Are you interested in improving your playing?
 - Are you happy with where you are at in terms of skill, but perhaps are open to some tips that will make your playing easier?
 - What is your goal as it comes to ukulele? Where do you see yourself with your instrument in a year, two years, five years?
 - Are there any performers whose work speaks to you, who you would like to emulate?
 - Are there any songs that you want to learn? What is keeping you from learning those songs?
- **Community**
 - Do you play ukulele with a group? Are you connecting to a community through your instrument?
 - Do you share your music with others, perhaps through social media (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)?
 - If you play ukulele with a group, do you find yourself bored with the same songs, chords, and strumming?
 - If you are playing ukulele by yourself, do you want your ukulele to do more than play chords as an accompaniment?
- **Equipment**
 - Is your current ukulele an instrument that will allow you to reach your future musical goals, or is there something you can do to your ukulele to help you reach those goals?
 - Are there accessories you would like to use, or stop using?
 - Would you like to enter the world of electric instruments, effects, and amplification?
- **Learning Resources**
 - Where do you go to learn more about how to further your playing ability?

These questions will guide your direction as you pursue your instrument.

As you set your direction, **use SMART goals**. Don’t use these to micromanage your life, but to simply establish benchmarks. These are your goals, so they can be modified at any time.

S - Specific	You can achieve other goals along the way, but have a specific focus.
M - Measurable	Make sure you can tell when you have achieved that goal.
A - Attainable	Make sure the goal is realistic. You're probably not going to learn Jake Shimabukuro's arrangement of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" for some time (if ever)
R - Relevant	I suggest establishing goals that can achieve other goals in the future; you can redirect and take that skill with you
T - Timely	Related to "Attainable," make sure your goal can be achieved within a realistic time frame.

Just a thought: No one needs more than a few ukuleles, but you want an instrument that looks good enough, plays good enough, and sounds good enough to encourage you to keep playing. If your instrument doesn't inspire you to play it, or holds you back, it is time to invest in a different ukulele.

Suggested First Steps

I once had the chance to ask Aaron Keim what he thought the next steps should be for beginners. Aaron's response: "It depends on what someone wants to do with their ukulele—what they want to do determines their next steps."

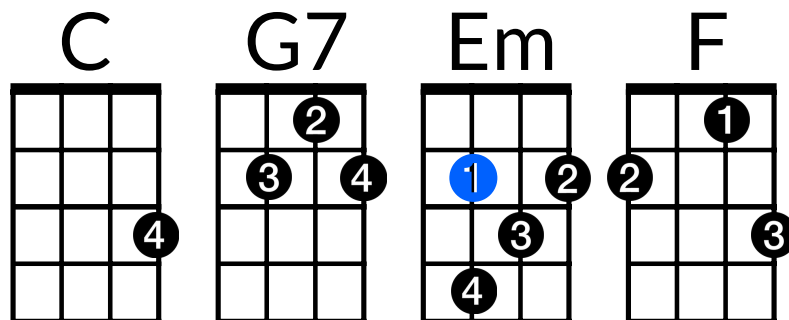
This book was created with the intent of helping beginners to find a next step. Many of the topics in this book could yield a workshop of their own (If not their own book). You don't have to study any of these topics, but they do represent the skills, techniques, and topics that lead to intermediate and advanced playing.

The following topics lead to later topics, and are a good place to start:

- Four Finger Chords (p. 12)
- Barre Chords (p. 6)
- Strumming (p. 18)
- Fingerpicking (p. 15)
- Standard Left Hand Techniques (hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides) (p. 9)
- Reading Tablature (p. 17))
- Playing a Melody (p. 16)
- Chord Melody (p. 8)

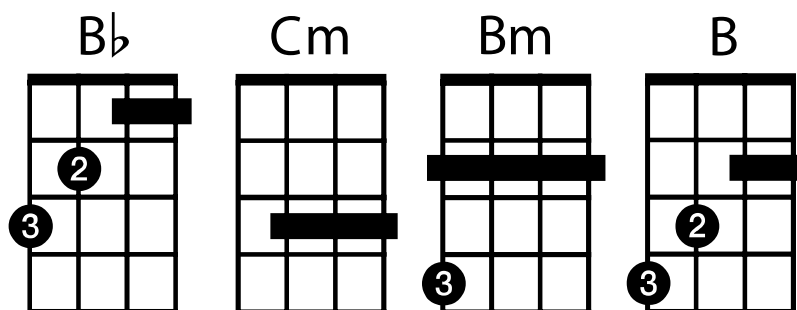
Alternate Chord Fingerings:

After learning standard chord positions, it is helpful to play chords with alternative fingerings to allow for the smoothest/least amount of motion required to play chords. **Note:** The ukulele is an instrument that has been in existence since c. 1879, and even then the tuning was based on other instruments. There is a reason why chords are *usually* played the way they are written. Chords should be learned in that way, with the knowledge that at a later time alternative shapes can also be used. Some examples:



Barre Chords:

Barre chords use the pointer finger of the barring hand to become a “barre” or nut, allowing chord positions to be played in “common positions” up the neck. Examples: B-flat, Cm, Bm, B, D7 (full), E, etc. Don’t think of squeezing the neck of the ukulele, but instead pull against the fretboard with your barring finger, and only use the thumb for support. Avoid excessive tension, and make sure your ukulele is set up correctly for barring at the 1st fret (In general, 0.5mm at the 1st fret, 2.65mm at the 12th fret).



A great exercise for barring comes from Ukulele Mike Lynch, barring all strings at the 5th fret and working up to the 1st Fret, and coming back down again.

Barre Chord Practice

Campanella Style:

Campanella is a technique of playing utilizing reentrant tuning that puts notes, as much as possible, on different strings, so they can ring longer. See the work by John King and Samantha Muir.

Campanella Scale

Choosing a Teacher or Resource:

There once was a saying that “Those that can’t do, teach.” In reality, teaching is a skill, and a gift in its own right. There are many ukulele players who teach, having never learned how to teach. As a result, you have to assess whether a resource is accurate, sequential, and helpful. How do you know that a teacher will be helpful to you? Here are some thoughts:

1. Watch their teaching and see if it moves sequentially in a way that is both clear and interesting to your particular learning styles.
2. Watch to see if their teaching contradicts other teaching that you have seen. If so, determine if they are correct in their approach. Take special note if they acknowledge that they are teaching something differently, and identify that they are doing so, perhaps comparing the technique to another teacher.

3. Watch how the teacher responds to other resources. If they indicate that their method or approach is the “only way,” they are best avoided.
4. Ask other knowledgeable players which resources they would use, and why they would use those resources. Both parts of the response are valuable.
5. Finally, if you are using a resource and decide that it isn’t for you—in that season, or just in general—do not be afraid to stop using the resource, or cancelling the subscription. Teachers are aware that there are different seasons in life, as well as different areas of expertise. When you have taken all you can from a teacher, it is good for you to move on—and to check back in the future if needed. Always leave the door open to return for a check-up, even from a teacher that you found out that wasn’t a fit!

Chord Melody:

Chord melody is a great way to combine chords and melody at the same time. Using tablature, chord melody is generally played with the thumb, and places the melody as part of the chord or as single notes on strings 1 and 2. This can lead to fingerstyle, clawhammer, or solo ukulele playing. Some great resources can be found by Ukulele Mike Lynch, Spencer Gay, Elizabeth Ragsdale, Tony Crimlisk, or my own blog/YouTube channel (UkeStuff). Here is an example of a basic chord melody arrangement:

Chord Melody: Happy Birthday

The musical score is written in 3/4 time and features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are "Hap - py birth - day to you! Hap - py birth - day to you! Hap - py birth - day, dear **** *, hap - py birth - day to you!". The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains four measures with lyrics "Hap - py birth - day to you! Hap - py birth - day to". The second system contains five measures with lyrics "you! Hap - py birth - day, dear **** *, hap - py birth - day to you!". Chords C7, F, and Bb are indicated above the staff. The tablature shows fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers.

System 1:

- Measure 1: Chord C7, lyrics "Hap - py". Tablature: T 3, A 0, B 0.
- Measure 2: Chord F, lyrics "birth - day to". Tablature: T 2, A 0, B 1/2.
- Measure 3: Chord C7, lyrics "you! Hap - py". Tablature: T 0, A 0, B 0.
- Measure 4: Chord F, lyrics "birth - day to". Tablature: T 2, A 0, B 3/0.

System 2:

- Measure 5: Chord F, lyrics "you! Hap - py". Tablature: T 1, A 0, B 0.
- Measure 6: Chord F, lyrics "birth - day, dear". Tablature: T 3, A 1, B 0/1/2.
- Measure 7: Chord Bb, lyrics "**** *, hap - py". Tablature: T 0, A 1, B 1/2/3.
- Measure 8: Chord F, lyrics "birth - day to". Tablature: T 0, A 1, B 3/0/2.
- Measure 9: Chord C7, lyrics "birth - day to". Tablature: T 0, A 1, B 3/0/2.
- Measure 10: Chord F, lyrics "you!". Tablature: T 1, A 0, B 2.

Clawhammer:

A banjo technique used with reentrant ukulele. With a combination of strumming, you create a “bom-dit-ty” sound that can be used on many folk songs. See the work by Marcy Marx, Aaron Keim, and ‘Lil Rev. Suggested Resource: [Clawhammer Ukulele Tabs and Techniques](#), 2nd Ed. By Aaron Keim The Quiet American Music (Print or PDF).

Clawhammer (Bom-Dit-ty)

The notation shows a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The bass line features a repeating pattern of eighth notes, often beamed together. The piece is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Above the staff, the chords C, G7, C, G7, and C are indicated. Below the staff, the fingerings (i, p, 3, 0, 2, 3, 2, 0) are written for each note. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Common Techniques:

Some common techniques are: Hammer-ons, Pull-offs, Slides, Harmonics (See Four String Boy), Three Finger Trémolo, and Left Hand Muting. Suggested Resource: Ukulele Aerobics by Chad Johnson (Hal Leonard) [Unfortunately, Ukulele Aerobics is not available as a PDF].

Hammer-Ons: After a string is played, hammer the next note down to make a sound.

Hammer-Ons

The notation shows a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melody consists of quarter notes, often beamed together. The bass line features a repeating pattern of quarter notes, often beamed together. The piece is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Above the staff, the letters H are indicated for each note. Below the staff, the fingerings (0, 3, 1, 3, 2, 4, 0, 2) are written for each note. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Pull-Offs: Play a note, and then pull off the string (pluck the string horizontally), resulting in a new note. If the note is not an open string, it has to be pressed down before pulling off the string.

Pull-Offs

Slides: Slide from one note to another. You can go up or down on a slide.

Slides

Harmonics: Stop the string at one of its natural notes to create a sound one octave higher than the actual position of the finger on the string usually plucking with the nail. You can also make an *artificial harmonic* by pressing down a fret and moving the correct amount up the neck (same number of frets) to create a harmonic.

Harmonics Occur at 12th, 7th, & 5th Frets (Open Strings) Artificial Harmonics

Three Finger Tremolo: Alternate plucking a string with *pmi* of your strumming hand to make a fast repeated sound. This can also be done with a single finger (see the flamenco style of Taimane).

Three Finger Tremolo

The first system of notation shows a tremolo pattern on the G string (4th fret) using the thumb (p), index (i), and middle (m) fingers. The second system shows a tremolo pattern on the B string (5th fret) using the same fingers. The notation includes a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. Below the staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) with fret numbers: 0 0 0 4 4 4 7 7 7 for the first system and 5 5 5 8 8 8 7 7 7 for the second system. The final measure of the second system shows a single note on the B string (5th fret) with a 'p' (thumb) plucking instruction.

Left Hand Muting: This is a technique that works best with barre or four finger chords. Leave the fingers on the strings but not pressing the strings to mute the sound (great for reggae music). The right hand is only required to strum, not mute the strings in any way. This can be done with a spare finger on a open chord.

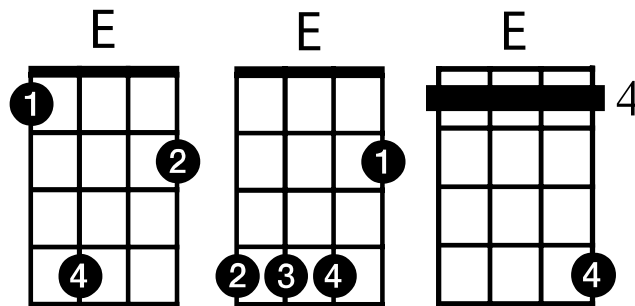
The first system of notation shows a barre chord on the Bb string (5th fret) using the thumb (p), index (i), and middle (m) fingers. The second system shows a barre chord on the Eb string (6th fret) using the same fingers. The notation includes a treble clef, key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb), and a 4/4 time signature. Below the staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) with fret numbers: 5 5 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 for the first system and 6 6 6 6 6 6 7 7 7 7 for the second system. The final measure of the second system shows a single note on the Bb string (5th fret) with a 'p' (thumb) plucking instruction.

The E Chord

The E chord is a common chord on many songs because many songs are written by guitar players, and the E chord is one of the easiest chords to play on guitar (or baritone ukulele). Some ukulele players attempt to substitute an E7 for every E, which only works if the next chord is an A or an F#m. Otherwise, in terms of music theory, an E7 to any other chord is wrong and will (more importantly) sound wrong.

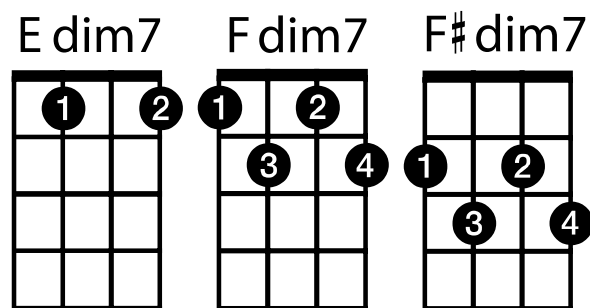
Ultimately, practice makes permanent, so if you are playing songs with the E chord, there are two options for you:

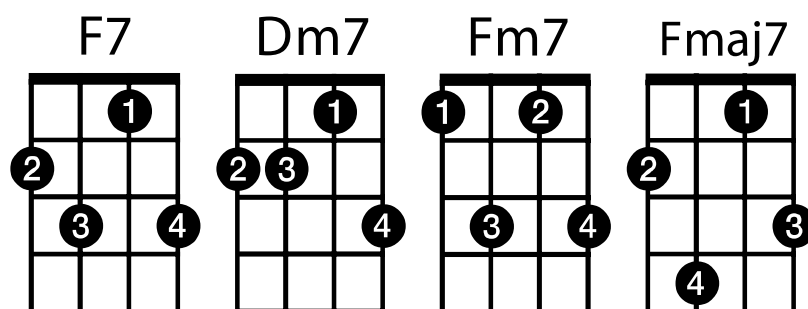
1. Learn the options to play the E chord.
2. Transpose those songs to another key.



Four Finger Chords

There are times where you will need or want to play chords with four individual fingers, even if a barre chord can be used, meaning that you will need to use your pinky to play a chord. Ukester Brown has an entire workshop on using the pinky. Here are some examples of four finger chords you will want to know how to play:





Low G or Linear Tuning

Some players prefer to use a Low G string, commonly known as linear tuning, where the G string on the ukulele is tuned below Middle C. There is nothing wrong with this, and can give the ukulele a deeper sound, particularly on a larger instrument (e.g. a Tenor). At the same time, some styles (e.g. Clawhammer and Campanella) call for High G (reentrant tuning), and some chords, such as Em, may sound better with a different fingering with Low G (using four fingers, so the lowest note is the E in the chord, rather than G—the third of the chord—which is more unstable harmonically). Some solo literature is specifically written for Low G. Most players, if they can afford two instruments, will have at least one ukulele in Low G. Solid body electric ukuleles come standard with Low G tuning.

Nashville Numbering System:

Connected to the issue of music theory, some ukulele groups or bands utilize the Nashville Numbering System to indicate the chords of a piece, quickly allowing the band to play in any key or to change keys on the fly.

This is a closely related approach to Roman numeral analysis of music theory.

Key	1 (Tonic) I	2 (Supertonic) ii	3 (Mediant) iii	4 (Submediant) IV	5 (Dominant) V (Often a V7)	6 (Submediant) vi
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G(G7)	Am
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C(C7)	Dm
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em

Notes on the Fretboard:

It is useful to know the names of the notes on the fretboard, which will come in time, particularly for the first position. The 3rd and 1st strings are worth learning first. The 3rd string for chord names, the 1st string for solo work.

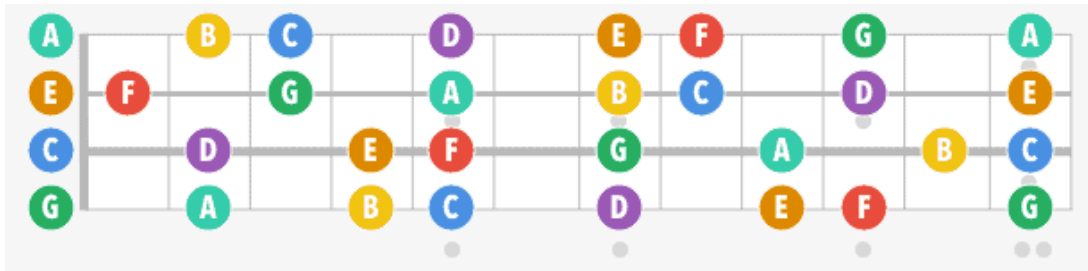
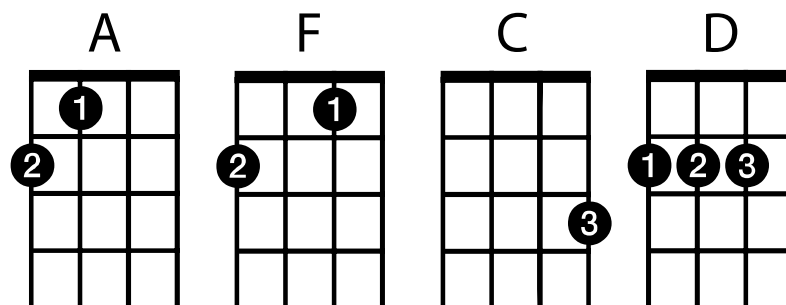
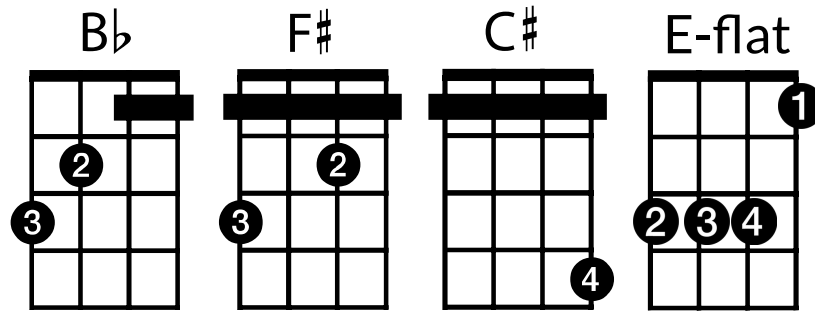


Image from fretboardia.com

Moveable Chord Shapes:

When you can play barre chords or four finger chords, you can then move those chords to other positions up the neck. However, there is a point where it is functionally easier to play only part of a chord up a neck, as higher frets decrease in spacing. See the work by Gerald Ross and Bryan Tolentino, who teach workshops on playing three string chords (“You don’t need to play all the strings all the time”). Ukester Brown is famous for saying, “You paid for the frets, you might as well use them.” That said, there is a reason we stay on the “lower” frets; they are easier to play, but they also are richer with more audible harmonics as we play. That said, there are really only 4 shapes for most types of chords as you move up the neck (example: major chords: A, F, C, D).





Picking Patterns:

Picking is a task for the strumming hand, in place of strumming, to pick the strings to create a different sound. This is often used as an accompaniment for singing and is much more difficult to do in a group (timing is difficult to master in a group).

In most picking situations on ukulele, only the thumb (p), index (i), and middle finger (m) are used. Fingers are used, though some players use a pick.

Travis Picking would be a technique in this area, popularized by Merle Travis where an alternating bass line was picked with the thumb supported along with syncopated melodies on the higher strings. A Travis Picking pattern will always alternate the 4th and 3rd Strings. Some teachers indicate that an accent should be played on the “and” of beat 2. Picking can combine other left hand techniques as well.

Picking: Travis Picking #1 Outside-Inside

Travis Picking #2

Travis Picking #3

Travis Picking #4

Low to High (Inside - Out) Claw then Inside-Out

Low to High (Inside - Out) Claw then Inside-Out

Playing a Melody:

The ukulele, in standard tuning, has a range of C4 to at least A6 (12 fret ukulele). As a result, the ukulele, for most of its range, matches the vocal range of children and women. It makes a great accompaniment, but you can also play the melody (as long as it doesn't go below C4, but potentially lower than G3 with a reentrant ukulele) with a group, during an instrumental break, or just for fun. Just as with picking chords, the thumb (p) usually plays strings 3 & 4, the index finger (i) plays string 2, and the middle finger (m) plays string 1.

Playing a Melody: Row, Row, Row Your Boat

C G7

Row, row, row your boat gen - tly down the stream.

Mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly life is such a dream!

Reading Tablature:

Tablature, by itself, shows four strings, then which strings and frets to play over time. By itself, tablature can be a little confusing in terms of rhythm; reading traditional notation can be problematic for reentrant tuning, or to know what fret to play a note on (e.g. In reentrant tuning, C5 can be string(fret): 4(5), 3(12), 2(8), 1(3). A logical solution to this issue is tablature that shows BOTH traditional notation and tablature.

A closely related issue is the term “tabs.” “Tabs” is used by players to mean any combination of things: tablature, traditional notation and tablature, or just the chords for a song (chord chart).

The diagram illustrates the layout of a guitar score. On the left, a grand staff is shown with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Below the treble staff are four staves labeled T, A, B, and 4, representing the four strings. To the right of these staves are arrows pointing to 'String 1', 'String 2', 'String 3', and 'String 4'. On the right side of the diagram, a single staff shows a sequence of notes with accidentals (flat, natural, sharp, flat). Below this staff are four fret numbers: 1, 2, 3, and 4, each with the word 'Fret' underneath it.

The musical score is titled "Reading Tablature" and is in 4/4 time. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and four staves labeled T, A, B, and 4. The first three measures show a sequence of notes on the treble staff and corresponding fret numbers on the four staves. The fourth measure shows four chords: C, F, G7, and C. The fret numbers for these chords are: C (3, 0, 0, 0), F (0, 1, 0, 2), G7 (2, 1, 2, 0), and C (3, 0, 0, 0).

Strumming:

Standard Strumming Patterns:

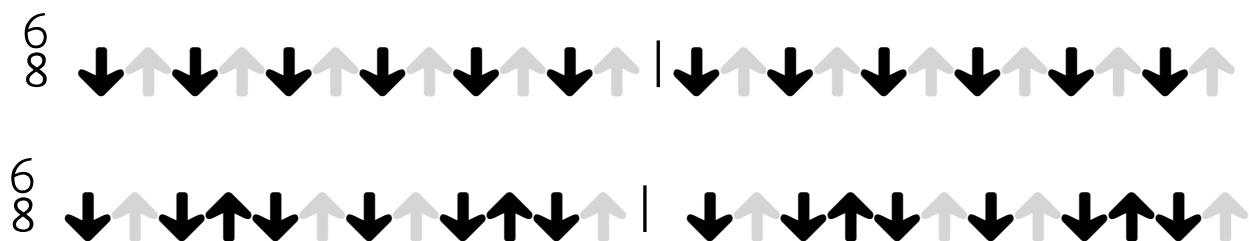
Regardless of the Time Signature, every strumming pattern is a combination of continual down and up strums, ideally never stopping. It doesn't matter if a strum is "straight" or "swung," like a physical clock, the action never stops moving.

Many people get far too concerned about using the "right strum," but in reality, as long as you follow three simple rules, you can find your own strum:

1. Hold a steady beat
2. Make sure the strumming pattern fits with the music
3. Change chords at the right time

Take a look at some of the following strums (2 measures each):





What about other strumming concepts, such as rolls, triplets, and palm muting?

A **Roll** is simply brushing all four fingers over the strings, either at one time with your thumb, index finger, or all four fingers, or hitting all four strings in sequence with each of your four fingers (all with your strumming hand, of course).

	Thumb Roll	Index Roll	Four Finger Roll	Rasgueado
Treble Clef				
Bass Clef				

A **Triplet Strum** divides a note normally divided by two into three, and also works WELL in 6/8 time (and 12/8). You get to decide whether you want to stress the triplet evenly, or emphasize the first of the three triplets:

Triplet Strum: Down - Down - Up

	C	C	C	G7	C	C	
Treble Clef							
Bass Clef							

C

[illegible]

Palm muting, or chucking, or chunking, is a rhythm device, almost always on a downstroke, usually on beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 time. It is created by rolling all fingers across the strings and stopping the sound with the palm (thumb area) of your hand. The most common use of the palm mute is with the Island Strum:

Palm Muting: Stage 1 Island Strum

Chord Rating: Stage 1 Island Strum

C

TAB

G7

TAB

C

The first system of the exercise consists of two measures. The first measure is marked with a 'C' above the staff, indicating a C major chord. The second measure is marked with a 'G7' above the staff, indicating a G7 chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a bass line with a 4/4 time signature. The bass line features a sequence of notes: D, D, U, U, D, U, D, D, U, U, D, U. The notes are represented by a combination of solid black circles and 'x' marks. The bass line is divided into two parts by a vertical line. The first part contains the notes D, D, U, U, D, U, and the second part contains D, D, U, U, D, U. The notes are represented by a combination of solid black circles and 'x' marks. The bass line is divided into two parts by a vertical line. The first part contains the notes D, D, U, U, D, U, and the second part contains D, D, U, U, D, U. The notes are represented by a combination of solid black circles and 'x' marks.

Accessories: As you play ukulele, you will find some accessories that make sense for you, and others that do not. Some examples: Straps, picks/nails, assistive devices, capos, tuners, electronics.

Different Scales or Alternative Tuning: While GCEA is considered standard, there are different tunings used by players and systems. For example, ADF#B tuning was very popular in Tin Pan Alley, and is still used in the Chalmers-Based Ukulele Programs in Canada. Larger ukulele scales, like Baritone, commonly use DGBE linear tuning, and many players experiment with other tunings including open tuning (GCEG). Should you experiment with other scales and tunings? If you want to, absolutely! If you do not want to, you do not have to.

Fingerstyle Ukulele: Picking the strings with the right hand to play accompaniments, melodies, or combined melodies with accompaniments (at the same time) Using picking patterns and generally the 1st or 2nd string to make a song, really an extension of chord melody. Suggest resource: Fingerstyle Ukulele by Aaron Keim, The Quiet American Music. (Paper Or PDF)

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songs were full of double entendres and would not likely be acceptable in today's world. Formby had a unique style that is still celebrated in George Formby clubs today, including the split stroke, thumb roll triple strokes, shake triple strokes, claw strokes, and fan strokes. Formby had different banjoleles tuned in different keys, both because he could not transpose and many of the strokes are most effective with first position chords. Andy Eastwood is likely the current master of the Formby Style, also see Christopher Davis-Shannon's e-Book "the George Formby Handbook" at thetinman.co

Hawaii: It would be a mistake to fail to discuss Hawaii when thinking about the ukulele. The ukulele simply doesn't exist without Hawaii's role in bringing workers to the islands in the late 1800s, or without King David Kalākaua accepting the instrument as part of Hawaiian culture. While the ukulele has experienced three waves of popularity on the mainland United States, the instrument has been going strong in Hawaii for nearly 150 years. As a fan of the ukulele, you will not see ukuleles everywhere in Hawaii, but some of the world's finest ukuleles are made in Hawaii (Kanile'a, Kamaka, Ko'olau, and KoAloha), there are excellent ukulele stores on the island, and of course, there are a number of Hawaiian ukulele artists and virtuosos who play everything from traditional Hawaiian music to pop songs. Shawn Yacavone, owner of "Ukulele Friend (a very high end ukulele store)," is leading the charge to create an 'Ukulele Archive in Hawaii with a large percentage of the existing early Hawaiian ukuleles. For anyone who loves the ukulele, a trip (or trips) to Hawaii and a chance to share the Hawaiian ukulele culture is a must-do item.

Jazz Ukulele: Jazz often incorporates swung rhythms and extended chords. The ukulele can only play four notes at a time, and thus great care has to be taken to choose the notes out of a jazz chord that you want to play. Lyle Ritz was a master of jazz ukulele, and Jim Beloff has a couple of books (including "Lyle Lite") featuring Lyle's style and arrangements; for a modern-day teacher, check out Sarah Maisel (wife of Craig Chee—they usually tour together and present workshops at the same ukulele festivals) and Gerald Ross.

Music Theory: There are many professional musicians who do not have any functional knowledge of music theory, but have been raised hearing music that is subject to the rules of music theory. Music theory impacts every aspect of music that you hear or play. While you do not need to be a college music theory major to play ukulele, some knowledge of music theory can be very beneficial, particularly if you want to know why a chord in a song sounds bad (mistakes happen), or how to better play an

improvised solo. There are many resources (books and videos) that can slowly bring you along in your knowledge of music theory, if you are so interested. The study of music theory would include learning scales and how they influence the chords in those scales. In a quick summary statement: Notes become scales; scales become chords; chords become progressions; progressions become phrases; phrases become songs.

Pitch Bends: Another playing technique available to ukulele players is the string bend, where you play the note and push (bend) the string to the side to slide the pitch up; many times more than one finger is used on the string to achieve the effect. This is most often used in jazz or jazzy music.

School or Library Ukulele Programs: J. Chalmers Doane used ukulele as a introductory instrument in local schools in the 1970s in Nova Scotia. His method spread throughout Canada and continues today. Ukulele found its first mass integration in music education in the United States in the mid 2010s. Many elementary schools now offer ukulele, or would be interested in offering ukulele. A complete set of instruments can be purchased for a school with accessories for under \$3000. There are many ways to get involved with providing ukuleles for your local school, or to offer ukuleles for checkout at your local library. A wonderful goal for community ukulele groups is to provide for the ukulele needs of their local schools or libraries.

Solo Ukulele: I call “Solo Ukulele” the playing style of non-singing ukulele performers, where they combine many aspects of playing to create solo music, with a combination of melody, harmony, rhythm, and advanced techniques in their playing. Most of the time, these players do not sing, as their ukulele acts as a complete instrument. For example, Jake Shimabukuro does not sing as he plays. In contrast, Taimane will sing on occasion.

Most of the time, the songs performed by these players will be compositions of their own or arrangements of existing songs, and are not written out. If the songs are written out, they have usually been done so by others. You can see some amazing resources at The Ukulele Site.
<https://www.theukulelereview.com>

It is also interesting to see historic solo players and how solo playing has changed (or continues to change), from past examples of Herb Ohta Sr. and Roy Smeck. There are many virtuoso players today, and a short list would include Jake Shimabukuro, James Hill, Taimane, Corey Fujimoto,

Kalei Gamiao, Tobias Elof, Brittany Paiva, and Aldrine Guerrero, for whom the ukulele is generally a “pure” solo instrument.

Much of the classical music repertoire for ukulele would be considered work for solo ukulele. The leading classical player and scholar today is Samantha Muir, also see the former work of John King.

Ukulele as a Rhythm Instrument: Best seen by James Hill and Feng E, using the physical body of the ukulele to play “drums” while playing solo ukulele at the same time. See James Hill’s “Billie Jean” as an example of this. Please note that this effect works best with an amplified ukulele.

James Hill: https://youtu.be/2gyxeXW_2T8 **Feng E:** <https://youtu.be/fhLZAu9jvU0>

Ukulele Care and Maintenance: While you do not need to be a luthier to own a ukulele, there are a number of skills that should be a part of every intermediate level ukulele player. That list includes changing strings, oiling the fretboard and bridge, dealing with sharp fret ends, knowing about humidity, installing strap buttons, adjusting action, and replacing tuners.

Ukulele Festivals: There are ukulele festivals throughout the world, and besides gathering with other ukulele aficionados, there are often vendors and “headliners.” This is a personal opinion, but a workshop with a headliner may not be life-changing, but you may find one or two techniques—or a whole new area of ukulele music to study in the future. Those techniques or new area may be worth the full price of admission (if there is one!). Major conventions in the US include the LA Ukulele Festival, TBUG, Ashokan Ukulele Festival, Funky Frets Ukulele Festival, and Mighty Uke Day. And of course, we need to mention the Silver Creek International Ukulele Festival!

Ukulele Groups: If you have time in your life, it can be a great benefit to play with others on a regular basis. COVID caused many groups to move online, and as such, there are still online options for those who cannot gather in person. There can be challenges with local groups, such as groups that “get stuck” playing the same songs with the same strums every week, there can always be personality clashes, and some groups are more beginner oriented. There are solutions for all of these issues, such as sitting away from people that do not match your energy, using fingerstyle instead of strumming, suggesting new songs, and playing up the neck in different positions. However, playing regularly and with others is rewarding and builds an invaluable connection through community.

Resources for Next Steps

If you are interested in further instruction on the ukulele, check out the following websites. Some of these are subscription-based, and appear in alphabetical order. Please note that no one paid for inclusion in this list.

Aloha City Ukes (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://alohacityukes.com>

ArtistWorks (Craig Chee & Sarah Maisel) (Instruction)
<https://artistworks.com/ukulele-lessons-craig-sarah>

Bernadette Teaches Music (Instruction)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHF88ovEEPETzNtEUbgGBuw>

Bernadette's 30 Day Ukulele Course (Instruction)
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJFa3EaocfZmuwRS6jXrrpUj7uWoTaqVW>

Cynthia Lin (Instruction)
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cynthialinmusic>

Daniel Ho (Instruction)
<https://www.danielho.com/>

Got a Ukulele (Ukulele Reviews)
<https://www.gotaukulele.com>

Graded Repertorie for Ukulele (Books) ukulelecorner.com Jeff Peterson

Katie DeNure (One Music School) (Instruction)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXGiCLn-Xh9VwDT8h06rOIA>

Living Water Ukulele Strings
<https://www.kenmiddleton.co.uk/shop>

Matt Dahlberg (Instruction)
<https://mattukulele.com/>

Matt Stead (Instruction)
<https://www.mattsteadukulele.com/>

Mim's Ukes (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://mimsukes.com>

Rock Class 101 (Instruction)
<https://rockclass101.com>

U Can Uke (Instructions)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJw6mvMFO5YaK-rMcQRQ0Ew>

Uke Like the Pros (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://www.ukelikethepros.com>

Uke Magazine (UK)
<https://worldofukes.co.uk/uke-magazine-shop>

The Uke Republic (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://www.ukerepublic.com>

Ukester Brown
<http://www.youtube.com/@UkesterBrown> <https://www.ukesterbrown.com/>

UkeStuff
<https://www.youtube.com/ukestuff> <http://www.ukestuff.info>

Ukulele Aerobics (Book) by Chad Johnson Hal Leonard Publishing

Ukulele Mike Lynch (Instruction)
<http://www.youtube.com/@MusicTeacher2010> www.ukulelemikelynych.com

Ukulele Magazine
<https://ukulelemagazine.com/>

The Ukulele Site (Ukulele Dealer and Instruction)
<https://theukulelesite.com>

The Ukulele Sisters (Instructional Materials)
<https://ukulele.io>

Ukulele Underground (Lessons, Forum)
<https://ukuleleunderground.com>

Ukulele Wales (YouTube)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQxNRbyi3i4Nvqpo55bWBkg>

The Ukulele Way/Uketropolis (Instruction)
<https://www.uketropolis.com/theukuleleway>

Uncle Rod's 'Ukulele Boot Camp (Instruction)
<http://ukulelebootcamp.weebly.com>

Ukulele Zen (Instruction)
<https://www.youtube.com/user/StUkulele>