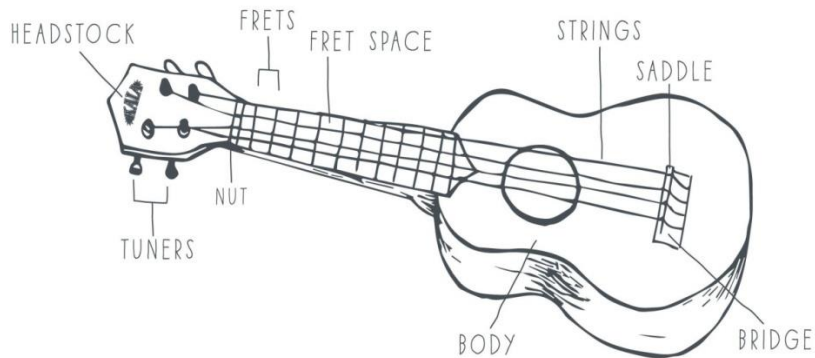


BEGINNERS' REALLY SLOW JAM - NOTES

PARTS OF THE UKULELE



At BUG, if I'm explaining to you how to form a chord, I use numbers for the fingers, strings, and fret spaces. Here are the numbers for the fingers:



The strings are numbered 1 through 4 as follows

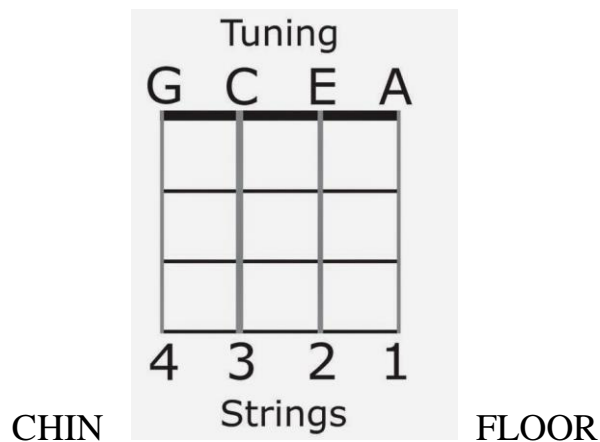
G is the string closest to your chin = 4;

C = 3;

E = 2;

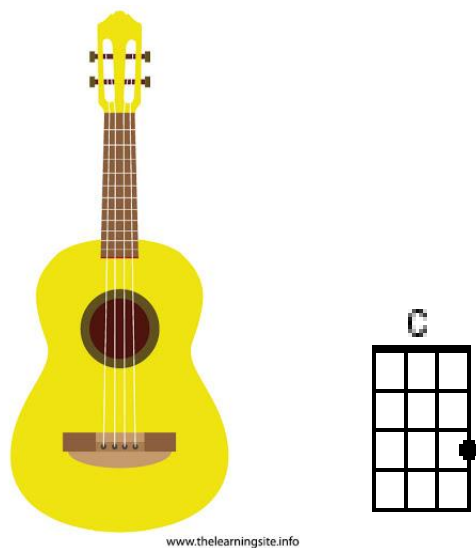
A the string closest to the floor = 1

The fret spaces (we call them frets for short) are numbered starting at the nut.



CHORD DIAGRAMS

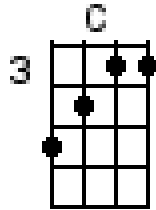
A chord diagram shows you what frets to put your fingers on to play a certain chord. A chord diagram represents the top four frets of the ukulele as you see them if you were to stand your ukulele upright facing you, and looked straight at it, like this:



The parts of the chord diagram are as follows:

- **Vertical lines** represent the strings of the ukulele, starting with the G-string on the far left of the diagram, and moving to the A-string on the far right.
- **The thick horizontal line** at the top represents the nut of the ukulele.
- **The thin horizontal lines** represent the fret wires. The first line below the nut is the first fret wire and the very bottom line is the fourth fret wire. The spaces in between the fret wires are fret spaces (which we refer to as frets).
- **The dots** show you where to put your fingers to form a particular chord. The chord diagram above tells you that the C chord is formed by putting your finger on the A string – 3rd fret.

Not all chord diagrams start at the nut. If you see a chord diagram that doesn't have a thick black line at the top, a number should appear at the top left. This tells you the fret position where you form your chord.



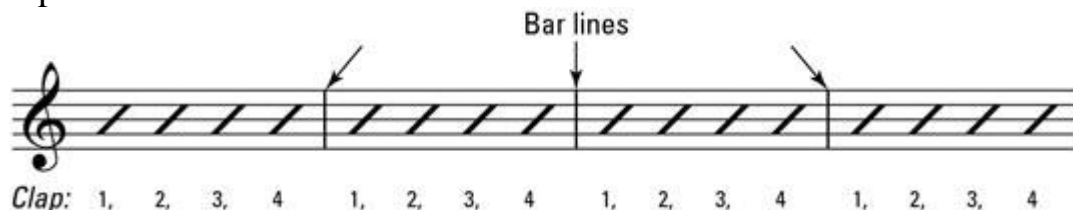
We suggest you start by getting familiar with chords like C, C7, F, G, G7, D, D7, Bb, A, Am, A7, Em, and E7. An electronic chromatic tuner is also an invaluable purchase so you can easily tune wherever you are. Mark has a Profile clip-on ukulele tuner available on his website on sale: <https://www.bytowninstruments.com/collections/tuners>

On the BUG website, on the [TIPS AND HELP](#) page, there are lots of links to some of the best tutorials, chord charts, strumming patterns, and a ton of other resources that we've found on the internet.

UKULELE MUSIC THEORY FOR BEGINNERS

BAR LINES

A **bar line** divides music into measures (also called bars), breaking up the musical paragraph into smaller, measurable groups of beats as shown in the following figure where the slash marks represent each beat:



In music, each measure has a specific number of beats — most commonly, four beats. Measures help group beats into patterns. This smaller grouping of four beats is easy to count: Just think “1, 2, 3, 4,” and then begin again with “1” in each subsequent measure.

Beats are used as a way of counting time when playing a piece of music. Beats give music its regular rhythmic pattern. Beats are grouped together in a **measure**, and the grouping of strong and weak beats is called **meter or time**.

TIME SIGNATURE

In order to play music, you need to know its **meter**, the beat you use when dancing, clapping, or tapping your foot along with a song. When reading music, the meter is presented like a fraction - e.g., **4/4** - with a top number and a bottom number. We call this the song’s **time signature**. The top number tells you how many beats to a **measure** or **bar**. The bottom number tells you what note gets the beat. You can find the **time signature**, at the beginning of every music piece.

There are different kinds of time signatures, the most commonly used are:

4/4 Time - example: Sloop John B

This means there are 4 beats in a measure. For example, 4 quarter notes (= 4 beats) in a measure will have the count - **1 2 3 4**. When you add the beats of all the notes you come up with 4, you thus count it as **1 2 3 4**. In 4/4 meter the accent is often on the first beat, or on beat 2 and 4.

3/4 Time – example: Log Driver’s Waltz

Think waltz music! This means there are three beats in a measure. For example, 3 quarter notes (= 3 beats) will have the count - **1 2 3**. When you add the beats of all the notes you come up with 3, you thus count it as **1 2 3**. In 3/4 meter the accent is usually on the first beat.

6/8 Time – example: Black Velvet Band

This means there are 6 beats in a measure. For example, 6 eighth notes in a measure will have the count - **1 2 3 4 5 6**. Here the accent is on the first and fourth beats. When the leader is counting you into a 6/8 song, you’ll usually hear them count | 1 2 | 1 2 |

CIRCLE OF FIFTHS – a useful concept for when you want to jam with other instruments!

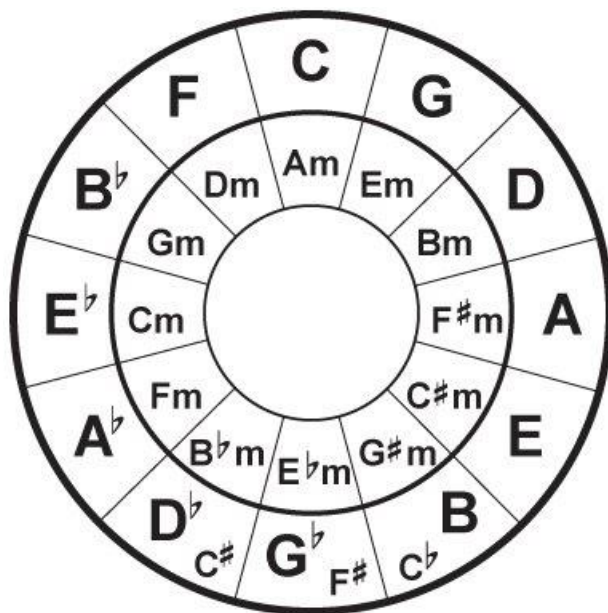
The **Circle of Fifths** below, is useful if you're playing in an open jam with other instruments, e.g., with friends around a campfire where there may be guitars, etc. The outer circle of the wheel are the major chords, the inner circle are the minor chords.

Ask the song leader what key they are playing the song in.

Example 1: if they say “C”, then you look at the C “spoke” on the wheel, and at the 2 spokes on either side of the C – the F spoke and the G spoke. If there are only major chords in the song, likely they will be using C, F, and G or G7. If you can hear minor chords in the song, then you can try Am first, and if that doesn't sound right try Dm or Em.

Example 2: if they say “D”, then you look at the D “spoke” on the wheel, and at the 2 spokes on either side of the D – the G spoke and the A spoke. If there are only major chords in the song, likely they will be using D, G, and A or A7. If you can hear minor chords in the song, then you can try Bm first, and if that doesn't sound right try Em or F#m.

CIRCLE OF FIFTHS



Another way if you don't have the chart above with you, is to count on your fingers. The **BIG** problem with this method is that you have to know which sharps/flats are in whatever key you're playing in. The wheel above shows you, but if using the finger method, you'd have to know.

In the sample chart below, the capitalized roman numerals stand for major chords, the small roman numerals stand for minor chords. Typically, easy songs use the I, IV, and V chords, and if there is a minor it will often be the vi chord.

I	ii	iii	IV	V		vi
C	Dm	Em	F	G or G7		Am
G	Am	Bm	C	D or D7		Em
D	Em	F#m	G	A or A7		Bm
F	Gm	Am	Bb	C or C7		Dm

HAVE FUN FRIENDS, AND HOPE WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE NEXT BUG JAM!