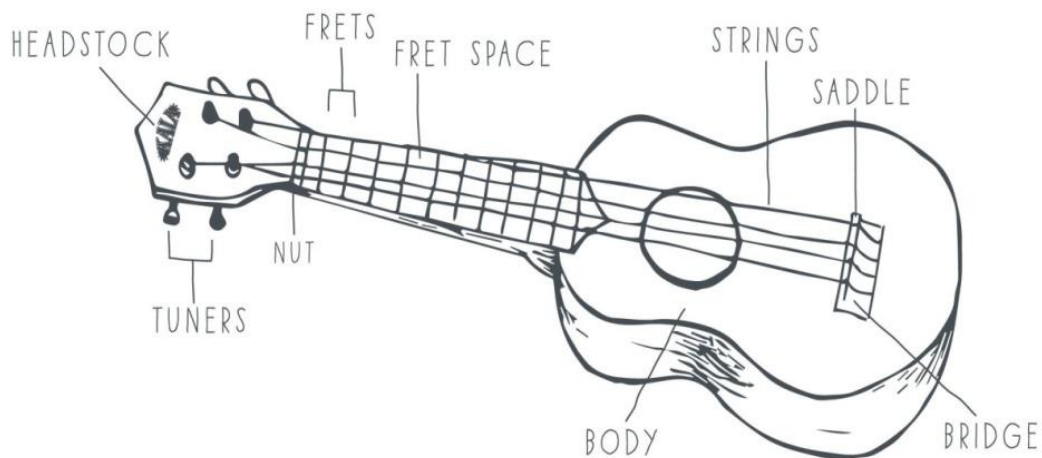


BEGINNER REAL SLOW JAM NOTES

Presented by Sue & Mark Rogers from the Bytown Ukulele Group (BUG)
www.bytownukulele.ca

PARTS OF THE UKULELE



When 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:



STRINGS

The strings are numbered 1 through 4 as follows:

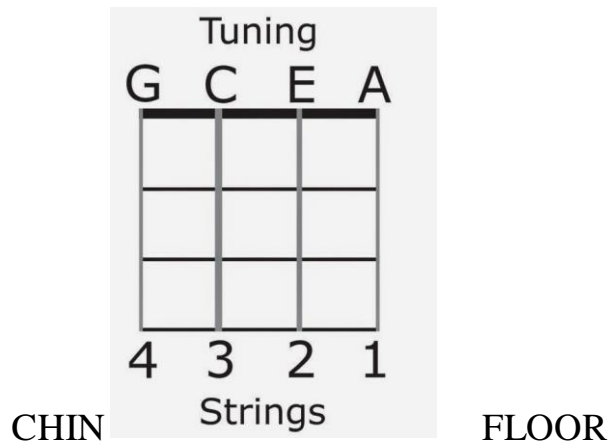
G the string closest to your chin = 4

C = 3

E = 2

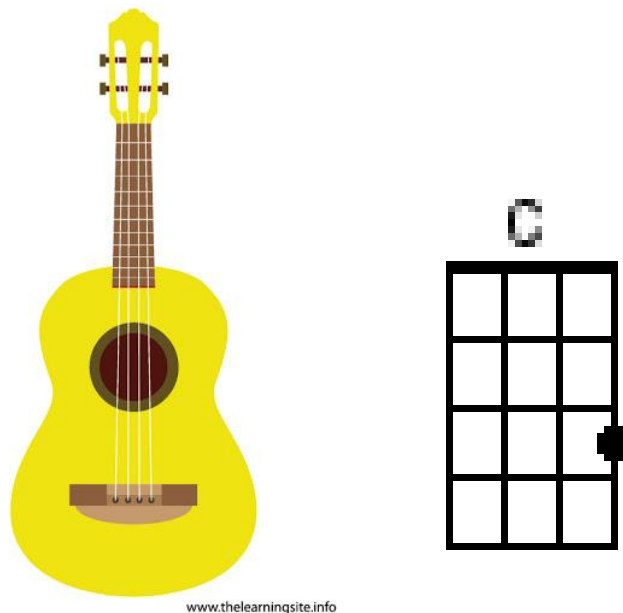
A the string closest to the floor = 1

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



CHORD DIAGRAMS

A chord diagram shows you what fret space 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:

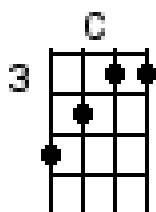


www.thelearningsite.info

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 what fret spaces to put your fingers on 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 space.

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 begin to form your chord.



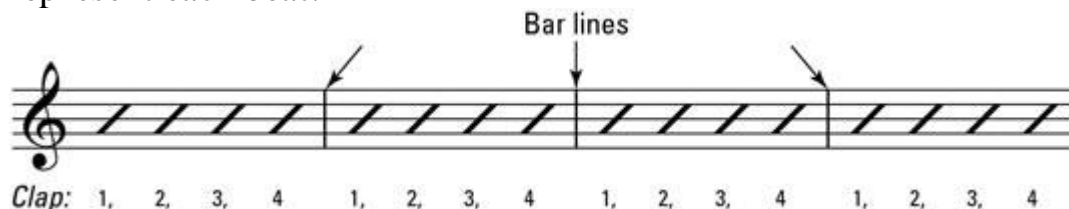
We suggest you start by getting familiar with chords like C, C7, F, G, G7, D, D7, Bb, A, Am, A7, Em, and E7. An electronic chromatic tuner is also an invaluable purchase so you can easily tune wherever you are. Mark has a Profile clip-on ukulele tuner available on his Bytown Instruments website: [Tuners – Bytown Instruments](#)

On the BUG website [Tips & Help - Bytown Ukulele Group](#) 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.

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. The grouping of strong and weak beats into a measure 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 notation, 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. In a BUG songsheet, I show the number of beats in the bar at the beginning or intro of the song – it’s how you count the song. As an example, four beats to the bar in a BUG songsheet is shown as INTRO: / 1 2 3 4 / [C] / [C] /; three beats to the bar would be shown as INTRO: / 1 2 3 / 1 2 3 / [C] / [C] /.

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 |

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

RELAXED POSTURE

- Shoulders down
- Ukulele headstock pointing between 1 o’clock and 2 o’clock position

CHORDING HAND POSITION

- Nails super short

- Thumb about halfway up on the width of the neck somewhere around the 2nd fret. This allows you to reach the strings properly and at the right angle.
- You should only be touching the strings with the very tips of your fingers, at a 90 degree angle. A mouse should be able to run through the hole formed by your chording hand.
- Your finger should be touching in the spot right before the fret wire closest to the body of the uke. Not on the fret wire. Not to the headstock end of the fret space.
- Keep your hand and arm loose so you can swivel your hand easily to form chords like D and G
- Let gravity do it's job.

STEPPING FROM ONE CHORD TO THE NEXT

- Usually, to form a 2 or 3 finger chord, you place your 1st finger (index) first, then the other will fall into place.
- A songsheet is like following a recipe. First look at all the chords you're using and what "order" they're in.
- Don't think of it as jumping from chord to chord but as stepping from chord to chord. Think about what fingers you can keep in place as you move to the next chord, for example, moving from G to C. Form your G chord. Now keeping your 2 fingers on the 2nd fret, lift your 3rd finger and put it on the first string 3rd fret. Keep all your fingers close to the fretboard.
- When you're playing a song and you have trouble moving between two particular chords, just practice the movement between those two chords with your chording hand without strumming. You're creating muscle memory.

STRUM

- 1st finger (index finger) scratching your nose; can support gently with thumb
- Wrist loose – action is in the wrist: like flicking away a fly or something on your finger. You're turning your wrist not using your whole arm.
- Don't strum over the sound hole – especially if you're a beginner, that's where you might catch your fingers. Play over what we call the "sweet spot" – where the neck joins the body of the uke.
- Your strumming hand is always moving **DUDUDUDU**
- You're choosing the rhythm based on the number of beats per measure and where you put the emphasis. You choose when to strike the strings and when not to – but your hand never stops moving DUDUDU.
- When you're first learning strums, mute the strings with your chording hand and just practice the strum without chording.
- 4/4 time: the island strum (also known as the swiss army strum) – is the most popular strum used for songs that have 4 beats in the measure.
/ **D Du udu / D Du udu /**
- You could also do / **D dududu / D dududu /** OR / **D d D d /** OR / **D du D du /**
- 3/4 time: / **D dudu / D dudu /** OR / **D udu / D udu /**

**HAVE FUN FRIENDS, AND HOPE WE'LL SEE YOU AT A
BYTOWN UKULELE JAM OR COMMUNITY EVENT SOON!**