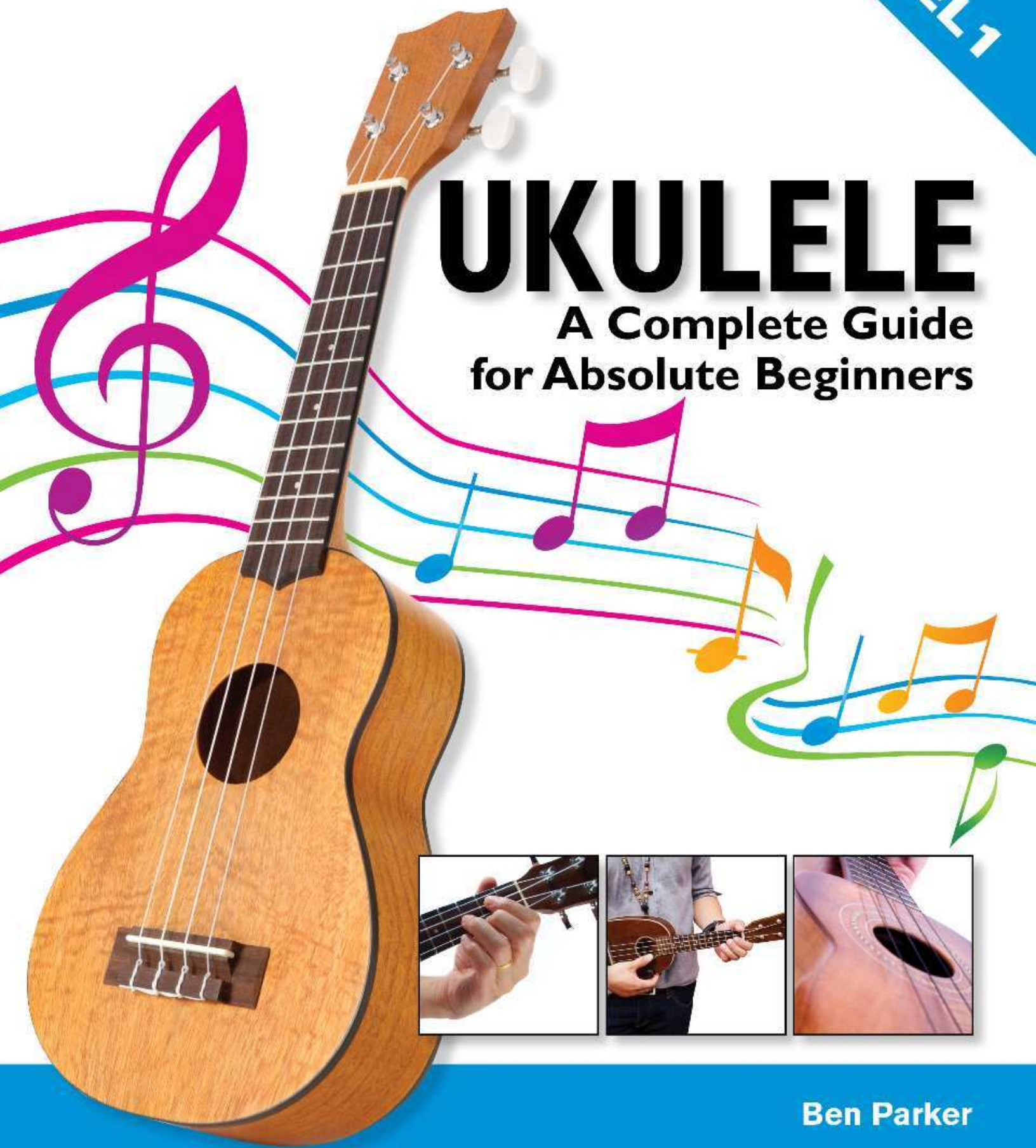


How To Play

LEVEL 1

UKULELE

**A Complete Guide
for Absolute Beginners**



Ben Parker

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How To Play **UKULELE**



A Complete Guide
for Absolute Beginners

Ben Parker

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Introduction

Welcome to **How To Play The Ukulele**. The ukulele is slowly becoming the most popular instrument for children and adults who wish to start playing a string instrument. Its size and simplicity (it only has 4 strings!) makes it an easier instrument to get to grips with quickly and many beginners are playing their first chord within minutes. In this book we aim to give you your first simple steps to playing which can act as a basis for a bright future with the instrument. Also included in the book is a step by step guide to reading music.

The ukulele is also fun to learn in groups or as a parent/child activity. Ukulele groups are springing up all over the country and the sound of a group of ukuleles playing is incredibly inspiring!





Practice

Like any skill, playing an instrument takes a lot of practice. Practicing more regularly for shorter lengths of time is more effective than practicing for an hour or so just once a week. The minimum amount would be around 15-20 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week. The ideal amount would be 20 minutes a day, 7 days a week. Maybe set out a plan of your week and work out the best times to fit your practicing around the other things you do. The more your practice can become part of your weekly or daily routine the better.



***Remember!
Little and
often is best!***



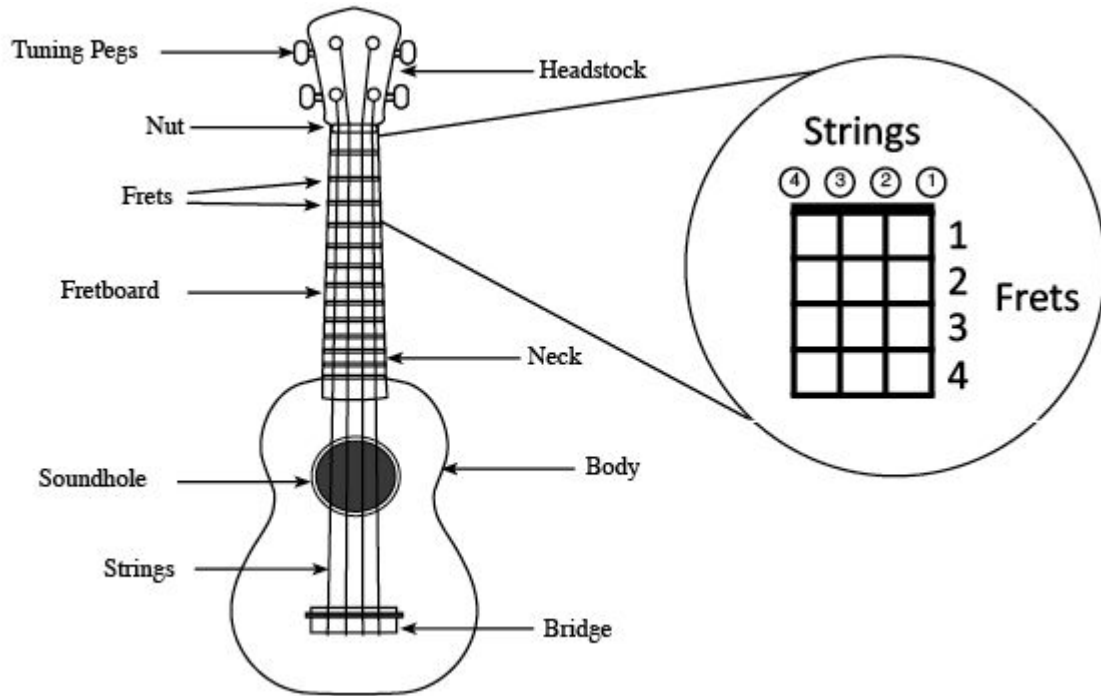


About The Ukulele



The Ukulele originates from Hawaii and is an adaptation of string instruments brought to the island by Portuguese immigrants in the late 1800's. It comes in four different sizes: **soprano, concert, tenor and baritone**. The most common beginners' instrument is the soprano ukulele. The ukulele is similar to the guitar — you can play both chords and single notes, strum and pick. These different ways of playing make it an interesting instrument to learn, with different stages of ability as your skills progress.

The Instrument



How To Hold The Ukulele

Because the ukulele is such a light instrument you can hold it between your right forearm and your body. Hold it in place by pushing it gently against the bottom of your ribcage. This works for both a seated and a standing playing position. You can then strum from the wrist so your forearm can keep the ukulele close to your body.



What To Do With Your Hands

LEFT HAND POSITION

Your left hand position is really important. Make sure your thumb is around the back of the neck. When you fret a note it should be like ‘pinching’ the neck between your thumb and fretting finger. Fretting will be explained in more detail later on in the book.



LEFT HANDED PLAYERS



Some left handed players play the ukulele right-handed. If you are left-handed try the playing position shown and see how it feels. If it feels strange, try playing it the other way round (with the ukulele headstock pointing to your right) — if this position feels more comfortable then you’ll need to have the ukulele re-strung upside down. Ask at your local music store — they should be able to do this for you.

Using A Plectrum / Pick

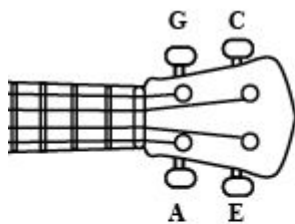
You can use your right hand fingers to play a ukulele but many players use a plectrum (often called a pick) to strum chords and pick single notes. It is best to strum across the strings where the neck joins the body of the ukulele. This produces a bright sound. If strumming with your fingers (without a pick) use your thumb to strum downwards and your index finger for the upstroke.

Picks come in different thicknesses. A pick of medium thickness (nylon .60mm) is probably the best place to start. A brighter tone can be produced with a pick and most players find it easier to move swiftly between playing chords and single notes when using one. There will also be more about picking the strings with your right hand fingers later on in the book.

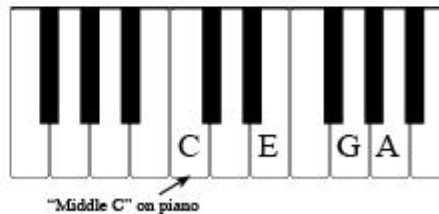
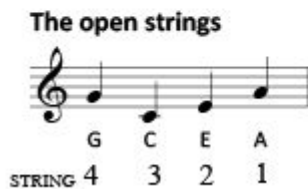


Tuning

The strings of the ukulele are tuned to the notes **G, C, E & A**. These strings are known as the ‘open’ strings. Pressing down on a string with a left hand finger to change the pitch of the note is called **fretting**. Unlike most other fretted string instruments the string closest to you as you look down at the ukulele in playing position is **NOT** the lowest in pitch. This peculiar string layout is what gives the ukulele it’s distinctive sound. The strings are also numbered to help us when referring to them.



TUNING PEGS	To Make Your Note Lower	To Make Your Note Higher
TURN PEGS ON TOP ROW (G&C strings)	CLOCKWISE	ANTI-CLOCKWISE
TURN PEGS ON BOTTOM ROW (E&A strings)	ANTI-CLOCKWISE	CLOCKWISE



To keep your ukulele in tune you can either use a pitched instrument such as the piano to give you reference pitches or you can use one of the many digital tuning apps now available for smartphones and laptops. There are also certain websites which give you a ‘player’ which allows you to play recorded ukulele notes as a reference.

Stretching The Strings

Sometimes, especially with new instruments, you may find that soon after you have tuned your uke, it will quickly go out of tune again. This does not always mean you have a poor quality instrument, rather that you are experiencing string ‘slippage’. Where the strings haven’t had enough time

to 'bed in' it may be difficult for them to stay in tune. When this occurs try stretching the strings by pulling each one individually away from the fretboard by about 3cm (be careful with this). This will probably take the string out of tune. Tune it back to its pitch and stretch again. Repeat this process until the string no longer drops in pitch when stretched.

Knowing Your Notes

The notes on the music staff (see below) either sit on the lines or in the spaces. As notes go higher vertically on the staff they go higher in pitch. As they go lower vertically on the staff they go lower in pitch. To help us remember the notes in the spaces, think ‘SPACE’ rhymes with ‘FACE’. To help us remember the notes on the lines, the first letters of each of the words ‘Every Good Boy Deserves Football’, make up the notes on the lines of the staff as they go UP.

Notes in the spaces



Notes on the lines



Music runs alphabetically from A to G and then starts again on A. When notes go above or below the staff we use **ledger lines** to keep track of how many spaces/lines down or up they are.



Your ukulele's lowest note is the open C string (string 3) and the highest note of most soprano ukuleles is a high D (way up on the 17th fret of the A string!). This is what is called the **RANGE** of the instrument.

D (17th fret, string 1)

C (open string 3)

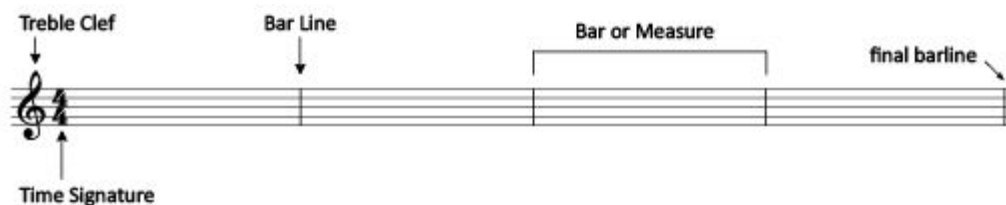
The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. Two notes are present: a C note on the third line (labeled 'C (open string 3)') and a D note on the first space (labeled 'D (17th fret, string 1)'). A diagonal line connects the two notes, indicating a double-stop or a specific fingering technique.

Other Musical Symbols

There are many symbols used in written music. Some are used to help us navigate our way around and some are used to give instructions along the way.

You will see the **Treble Clef** at the beginning of all ukulele music. This tells us where the notes are to be played.

The **Time Signature** is an important sign at the beginning of any piece of music. It tells us how many beats to count in each bar. At a beginners' level it is only really important to look at the **top** number. This will tell you how many beats there are in a bar.



Repeat


marks

Sometimes you may want to play the same passage of music more than once. To save writing out that passage of music again we use repeat marks. When you see an end repeat mark you either go back to the opening repeat mark or, if there isn't one, you go back to the beginning of the piece.



Notes And Note Lengths

Some notes last for longer than others. To show these different lengths notes look different according to their duration:


Whole Note
(4 beats)


Half Note
(2 beats)


Quarter Note
(1 beat)



Tablature

Over the years we have developed another helpful way of writing out music for string instruments. This is called **tablature**.

Tablature or **TAB**, as it is commonly known, shows four lines to represent each of the Ukulele strings. The bottom line is the G string and the top line is the A string. Numbers shown on the TAB stave tell us where to **fret** notes with the left hand. A '0' (zero) tells us that we are to play the string open. A '2' tells us we need to press that string down at the 2nd fret.

When we have to play chords (two or more notes played at the same time) — they are shown as stacked numbers on the relevant strings.

TAB doesn't tell us the duration of the notes so it is important to read the music stave above so we can play the notes for the correct length of time. The TAB numbers will line up with their corresponding notes in the music stave above making it easier for you to read from left to right.

The open strings of the Ukulele shown in TAB:



The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The melody consists of four quarter notes: C4, E4, G4, and A4. Below the staff is a four-line TAB stave. The first line (A string) has a '0' under the first measure. The second line (E string) has a '0' under the first measure. The third line (C string) has a '0' under the first measure. The fourth line (G string) has a '0' under the first measure. The TAB stave is labeled with 'T', 'A', 'C', and 'B' on the left side, corresponding to the strings.

A mixture of open strings & fretted notes:

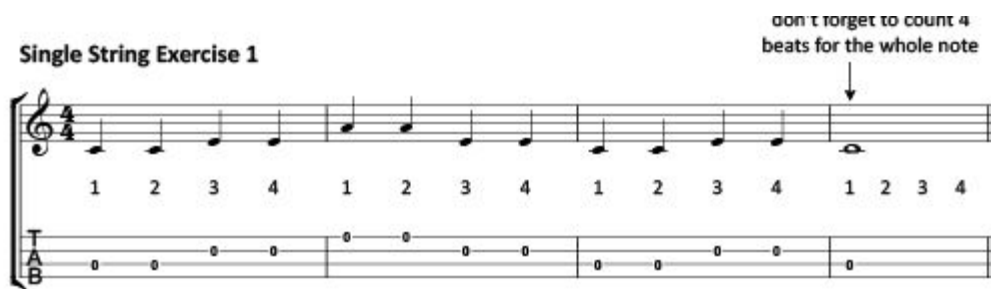
The image shows a musical score for guitar in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eight quarter notes: C4 (open), D4 (open), E4 (open), F4 (open), G4 (open), A4 (open), B4 (open), and C5 (open). The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with two lines labeled 'T' (top) and 'B' (bottom). The fret numbers are: 0 2 0 1 | 3 1 0 2.

Single String Exercises

To prepare us for melodies on the ukulele we must first get used to picking the strings individually. Try the following exercises which will help you to get used to moving between the open strings. Count along as you play, it will help you place the notes correctly in each bar.

Single String Exercise 1

don't forget to count 4 beats for the whole note

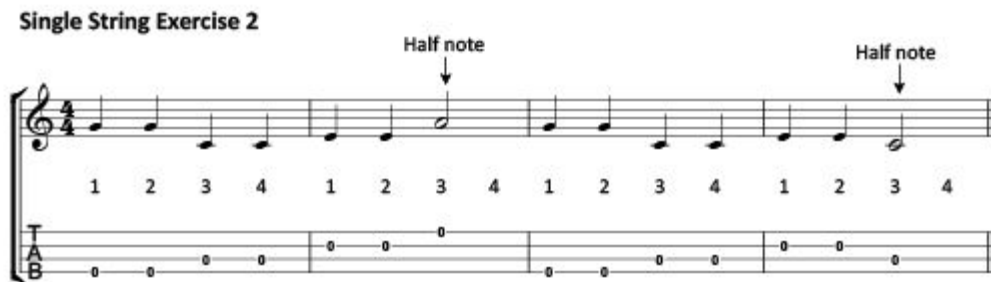


It may help to tap your foot in time with quarter notes. This will help you keep a steady pace for your playing.

In exercise 2, watch out for the half notes in the 2nd & 4th bars. These should be held for the last two beats of the bar. Make sure you count their two beats, count beat 3 as you play the note then 4 as the note 'rings on'.

Single String Exercise 2

Half note



Fretted Notes

Now let's try playing a fretted note. The first fretted note you are going to play is D. D is played on the 2nd fret of the C (3rd) string. You should try to use the same number finger of the **left hand** as the fret written. **Remember to push down just behind the required fret, not on top of it.**



WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN

When you play higher frets (when your left hand moves nearer to your body) you are moving **UP** the ukulele neck and when you're playing lower frets you are moving **DOWN** the ukulele neck. This often causes confusion with beginners because it is the opposite of what seems logical.

Now try playing the following tune which is made up of a mixture of open strings and your new fretted D note. Watch out for the whole note in the last

bar and make sure you let it 'ring' for four beats.

New note D - exercise

whole note

1 2 3 4

0 0 2 2 0 0 2 0 2 2 2 0

The next new fretted note we are going to learn is F. F is played on the 1st fret of the E (2nd) string (use the 1st or index finger of your left hand).



Fretted Note F

Musical notation for the note F on a treble clef staff. The note is on the second line. Below the staff is a TAB line with the number 1.



Now try playing the exercises below. They contain your new notes D and F:

New notes D & F - exercise 1

Musical notation for exercise 1, showing a sequence of notes on a treble clef staff and a corresponding TAB line.

New notes D & F - exercise 2

Musical notation for exercise 2, showing a sequence of notes on a treble clef staff and a corresponding TAB line.

Now let's learn the fretted note 'G'. This time it's a 3rd finger note on the 3rd fret of the E (2nd) string.



Fretted Note G



G



T
A
B
3



Now we have enough notes to play some simple tunes. Take care when playing to count your two-beat notes.



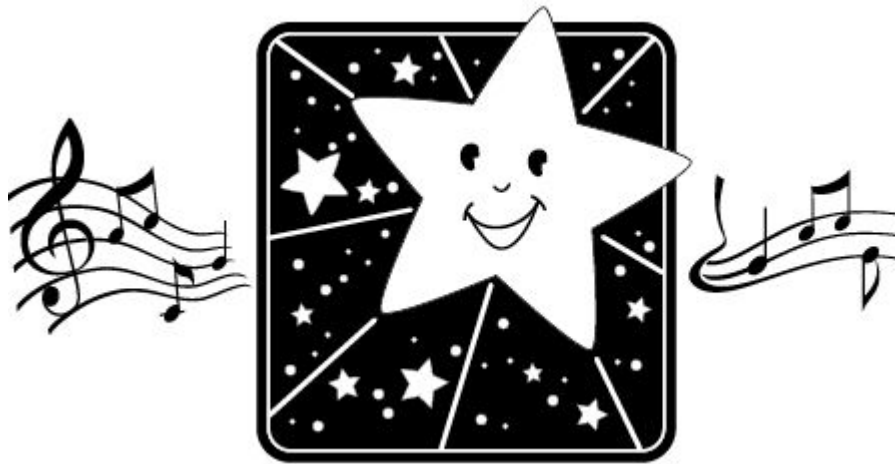
Mary Had A Little Lamb



T
A
B
0 2 0 2 | 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 | 0 3 3



T
A
B
0 2 0 2 | 0 0 0 | 2 2 0 2 | 0



Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Musical notation for the first system of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, showing the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with two lines labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 0 0 3 3 | 0 0 3 | 1 1 0 0 | 2 2 0.

Musical notation for the second system of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, showing the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with two lines labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 3 3 1 1 | 0 0 2 | 3 3 1 1 | 0 0 2.

Musical notation for the third system of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, showing the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with two lines labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 0 0 3 3 | 0 0 3 | 1 1 0 0 | 2 2 0.



Out In The Fields

Musical notation for the first system of "Out In The Fields". It consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The tablature is: 0-2-0-1 | 2-0-0 | 0-2-0-1 | 0-2-0.

Musical notation for the second system of "Out In The Fields". It consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The tablature is: 0-2-0-1 | 2-0-0 | 3-1-0-2 | 0-2-0.

The C Major Scale

Except for a high C, you now know all the notes which make up the C major scale. A scale is a run of notes which go up through a recognized pattern from one note to the same note an **octave** above. An octave is 8 notes ('oct' meaning 8 like 'octopus' or 'octagon'). The note up an octave sounds exactly the same but higher. Try playing your open C string (string 3) then play the 3rd fret of your A string (string 1). Both of these notes are C's but the second is a higher C.

Try playing the C major scale slowly at first. Make sure you use the correct fingers of your left hand:

The C major scale



FLATS AND SHARPS

From looking at the keyboard of a piano you will see there are white keys and black keys. The black notes are **flats** and **sharps**. These are written as a \flat symbol for a flat and \sharp symbol for a sharp. These notes also exist on a ukulele.

When you see a **flat** sign before a note it is played one fret **lower** than the natural (normal, un-flattened) version of the note. When you see a **sharp** sign you play the note one fret **higher** than the natural (normal, un-sharpened). Below on the left is your normal fretted note 'B' and on the right is your new fretted note B \flat . Note how the flattened B sits one fret lower than the normal B (called a 'natural').



Musical notation for Fretted Note B:

Treble clef, G-clef, one sharp (F#). The note is a whole note on the second line (G4).

TAB: 2

B



Musical notation for Fretted Note B \flat :

Treble clef, G-clef, one sharp (F#). The note is a whole note on the second space (B \flat 4).

TAB: 1

B





Now try ‘*Yankee Doodle*’ below. This is a good exercise in reading your new B^b note:

Yankee Doodle

The first system of musical notation for 'Yankee Doodle'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody is written in 4/4 time with quarter notes. The tablature uses numbers 1, 3, and 0 to indicate fret positions.

Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Melody: quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. Tablature: 1 1 3 0 | 1 0 3 0 | 1 1 3 0 | 1 0

The second system of musical notation for 'Yankee Doodle'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody continues with quarter notes. The tablature uses numbers 1, 3, 1, 0, 2, 0, 1, 1 to indicate fret positions.

Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Melody: quarter notes D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3. Tablature: 1 1 3 0 | 1 0 3 1 | 0 0 2 0 | 1 1

Key Signatures

To save writing out a flat sign before every note that needs to be flattened we can put a flat sign at the beginning of a piece to tell us that note is *always* flat. This works for both flats and sharps. This is called a **key signature**. Try playing '*Flat Bread And Beans*' but remember all B's are flat.



Flat Bread And Beans

Musical notation for the first system of 'Flat Bread And Beans'. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tablature staff is labeled 'TAB' and contains the following fret numbers: 1 0 1 3 | 0 1 3 0 | 1 0 1 3 | 0 1 3.

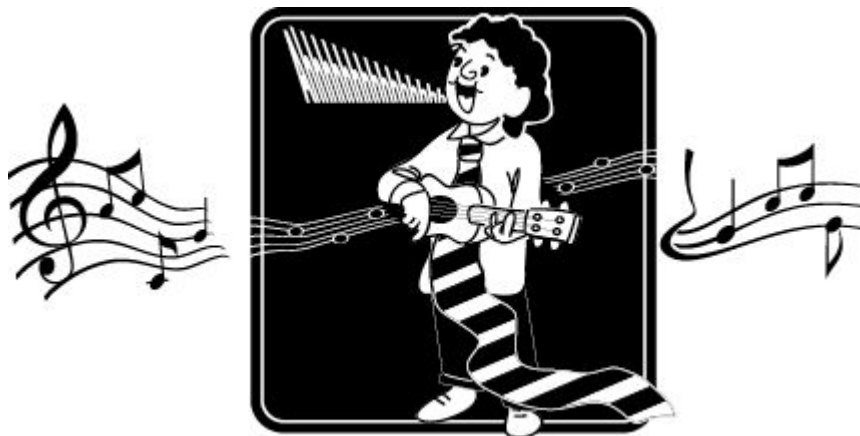
Musical notation for the second system of 'Flat Bread And Beans'. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tablature staff is labeled 'TAB' and contains the following fret numbers: 1 1 0 1 | 3 0 3 1 | 1 0 3 3 | 1.

Long Notes And Ties

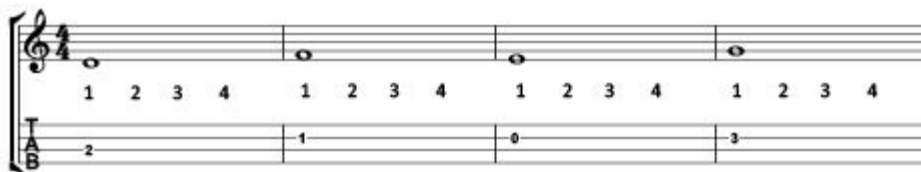
Long notes such as the whole note and the half note are often harder to play for beginners.

This is because you have to count the beats carefully as you wait for your longer notes to ring on.

A tie joins two notes together — you only have to play the first note but it now lasts longer (its length + the length of the note it is tied to).



Try playing the exercise below. Remember to count as you go and watch out for the second line when it moves up to half notes.



Musical exercise 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The exercise consists of four whole notes on the second line of the staff. Below the staff, the fret numbers for the guitar are indicated: 2, 1, 0, 3. Fingerings are shown as 1 2 3 4 for each note.



Musical exercise 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The exercise consists of four quarter notes on the second line, followed by a half note on the second line. A tie connects the two notes of the half note. Below the staff, the fret numbers for the guitar are indicated: 2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 2. Fingerings are shown as 1 2 3 4 for each quarter note, and 1 2 3 4 for the first note of the tied half note. An arrow labeled "TIE" points to the curved line connecting the two notes of the half note.



Eighth Notes/Quavers

As the pieces you play develop in style and ability you will start to come across **eighth** notes. These last for half a beat. When counting eighth notes use **1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &**. This will help you with the rhythm.

Eighth Note Exercise




Frere Jacques







Rests

Rests tell us when *not* to play. Like notes, they last for different lengths of time. These different lengths are shown as different symbols:

<p>Whole note rest (4 beats or one whole bar)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p>	<p>Half note rest (2 beats)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p>	<p>Quarter note rest (1 beat)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">z</p>	<p>Eighth note rest ($\frac{1}{2}$ beat)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p>
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Playing rests - Exercise 1



Playing rests - Exercise 2



Playing rests - Exercise 3





3/4 or Waltz Time

So far all of our pieces and exercises have been written with 4 beats to a bar. 4/4 is probably the most common time signature you will come across. The other time signature you will see a lot is 3/4 (three beats in a bar). Commonly known as **Waltz** time it was also a popular dance in the late 18th century.

Morning Mood is a tune from composer Edvard Grieg's piece 'Peer Gynt'. Try playing the first quarter note in each bar a little bit louder than the others. This will help you feel the waltz time more effectively. Notice your dotted half notes in this too. These count to three beats so make sure you count them carefully.



Morning Mood

The first system of music for 'Morning Mood' consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature, containing four measures of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5; A4, B4, C5, D5; B4, A4, G4, F4; and E4, D4, C4, B3. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a TAB system, containing four measures of fret numbers: 3 0 2 | 0 2 0 | 3 0 2 | 0 2 0.

The second system of music for 'Morning Mood' consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature, containing four measures of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5; A4, B4, C5, D5; B4, A4, G4, F4; and E4, D4, C4, B3. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a TAB system, containing four measures of fret numbers: 3 0 3 | 0 0 0 | 3 0 2 | 0.



Row, Row

Musical notation for the first system of "Row, Row". It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff contains five quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 0, 0, 0, 2, 0.

Musical notation for the second system of "Row, Row". It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff contains five notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4, with a slur over the last two notes. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 0, 2, 0, 1, 3, 3.

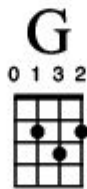
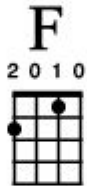
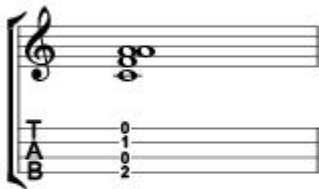
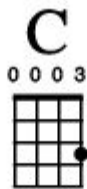
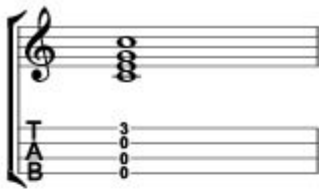
Musical notation for the third system of "Row, Row". It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff contains eight notes: G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4, D4, and C4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 0, 0, 0, 0.

Musical notation for the fourth system of "Row, Row". It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff contains five notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, and B4, with a slur over the last two notes. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 3, 1, 0, 2, 0, 0.

CHORDS

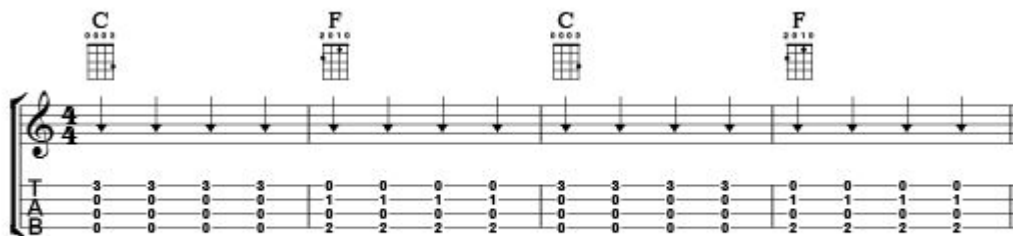
Chords are when you play two or more notes at the same time. Chords are played using ‘shapes’ which are written using **chord boxes**. These are simple diagrams showing you where to put your left hand fingers. The fingerings are marked just above each box in line with the string below them. The number indicates which of your left hand fingers you should use to push down and fret the note on that string. If the fingering reads ‘0’ then allow that particular string to ring ‘open’.

Here are your first three chords: C, F & G



Strumming Chords

Strumming is when you use your fingers or a pick to brush across all the strings of your chord. Below is a simple exercise using **rhythm arrows** to show the rhythm of your strumming pattern. Brush your fingers or pick **downwards** across the strings with each rhythm arrow:

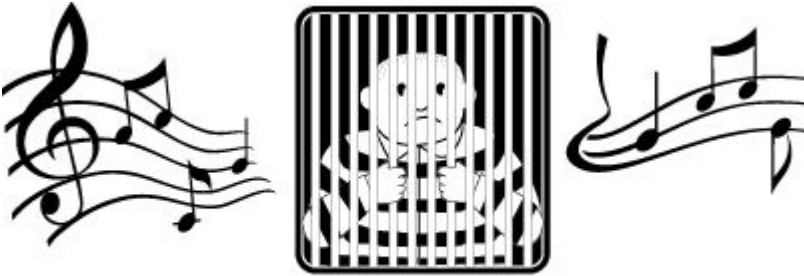


The exercise is written in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures, each containing four downward-pointing rhythm arrows. Above the staff are four chord diagrams: C, F, C, and F. Below the staff, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the fingerings for each note in the four measures:

Measure	1	2	3	4
T	3	3	3	3
A	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0
Measure <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>7</th> <th>8</th>	5	6	7	8
T	0	0	0	0
A	1	1	1	1
B	0	0	0	0
Measure <th>9</th> <th>10</th> <th>11</th> <th>12</th>	9	10	11	12
T	3	3	3	3
A	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0
Measure <th>13</th> <th>14</th> <th>15</th> <th>16</th>	13	14	15	16
T	0	0	0	0
A	1	1	1	1
B	0	0	0	0

Now try the pattern below. Work towards changing from one chord to another smoothly and quickly. This takes time to master so play the pattern slowly to begin with to give yourself plenty of time to change the chord. Note the repeat bar at the end. This means go back to the beginning and play again.

Now try playing the 12-Bar Blues pattern in the key of G. Your chords are now G, C & D. Make sure your three fretting fingers fit snugly on the 2nd fret for your D chord.



12-Bar Blues in G

G

TAB: 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2

C **G**

TAB: 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 3 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2

D **C** **G** **D**

TAB: 0 0 0 0 | 3 3 3 3 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0





Seventh Chords

Seventh chords are very common in ukulele music. They make a lovely ‘rock & roll’ twangy sound. Here is your 12-bar blues pattern in the key of A. This time each chord is a 7th chord. The strumming pattern is slightly different and uses eighth notes towards the end of each bar. Follow the direction arrows to help you with the strumming and try and count ‘AND’ on your upstroke.

12-Bar Blues in A with 7ths


A⁷



1 2 3 4 & etc.

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

D⁷




A⁷





T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1


E⁷





D⁷



A⁷



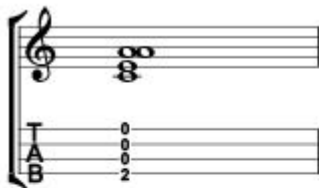
E⁷

T	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	.
A	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	.
B	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	.


Minor Chords

So far we have dealt with **major** chords and **seventh** chords. Now it's time to look at **minor** chords. Where **major** chords sound happy and **seventh** chords sound a little bit more 'bluesy' **minor** chords sound sad. Try playing the minor chords below then have a go at strumming through the following two songs.

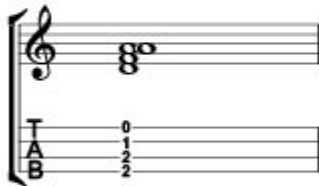


Musical notation for the Am chord. The treble clef shows a chord with notes A2, C3, and E3. The guitar tablature below shows the string numbers: 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0.

Am
2 0 0 0




A diagram of a guitar fretboard showing the Am chord fingering: the second fret on the second string, and open strings on the first, third, fourth, and fifth strings.



Musical notation for the Dm chord. The treble clef shows a chord with notes D3, F3, and A3. The guitar tablature below shows the string numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 0, 0.

Dm
2 3 1 0



A diagram of a guitar fretboard showing the Dm chord fingering: the second fret on the second string, the third fret on the third string, the first fret on the fourth string, and open strings on the first, fifth, and sixth strings.



Musical notation for the Gm chord. The treble clef shows a chord with notes G2, Bb2, and D3. The guitar tablature below shows the string numbers: 1, 3, 0, 2, 3, 1.

Gm
0 2 3 1



A diagram of a guitar fretboard showing the Gm chord fingering: the second fret on the second string, the third fret on the third string, the first fret on the fourth string, and open strings on the first, fifth, and sixth strings.





Fingerpicking

Another style of playing is fingerpicking. Fingerpicking involves using the thumb and fingers of the right hand to pick out individual notes of the chords. This technique creates an ‘arpeggio’ where the chord rings on but is broken up into its individual notes. It is important to hold down all fretted notes of the chord until changing to the next chord. The thumb and fingers of the right hand are each given a letter — *p* is the thumb, *i* is the index, *m* is the middle and *a* is the ring finger (or ‘anular’).



Rolling Hills

C
x000

F
x010

p i m a etc.

T
A
B

C
x000

G
0200

T
A
B

C
x000

F
x010

T
A
B

C
x000

G
0200

C
x000

T
A
B

Dancing Beauty is also a fingerpicking piece. Don't forget to take note of the key signature and sharpen all your 'F' notes.



Dancing Beauty

G D7 G

p i m a m i etc.

TAB: 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 2 0 2 0 2 0 | 0 2 3 2 3 2

Detailed description: This system shows the first four measures of the piece. The guitar part is in G major, 3/4 time. The melody is a simple eighth-note pattern. The lyrics 'p i m a m i etc.' are written below the first two measures. The guitar tablature is shown below the staff, with fret numbers 0, 2, 3, and 2.

G D7 G

TAB: 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 2 0 2 0 2 0 | 0 2 3 2 3 2

Detailed description: This system shows the next four measures of the piece, continuing the same eighth-note melody and guitar accompaniment as the first system.

C G D7 G

TAB: 0 0 0 3 0 0 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 2 0 2 0 2 0 | 0 2 3 2 3 2

Detailed description: This system shows the next four measures. The first measure has a C chord, while the others are G, D7, and G. The melody continues with the same eighth-note pattern.

C G D7 G

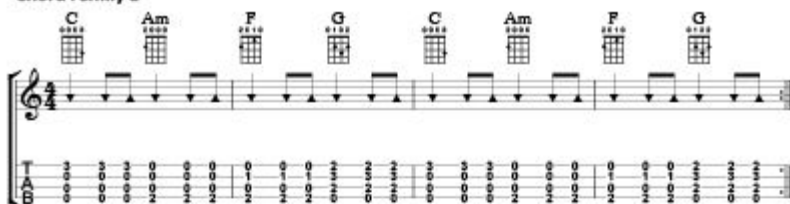
TAB: 0 0 0 3 0 0 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 2 0 2 0 3 2 | 3 2 3 2

Detailed description: This system shows the final four measures of the piece. The first measure has a C chord, followed by G, D7, and G. The melody concludes with a final chord in the fourth measure.

Chord Families

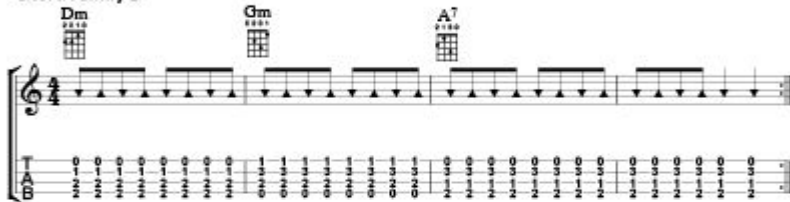
Chords are often used in groups called families. Certain chords work well with other chords and over the years (as with the 12-bar blues) very common patterns emerge. Strumming patterns have been given but feel free to try fingerpicking through the patterns too.

Chord Family 1



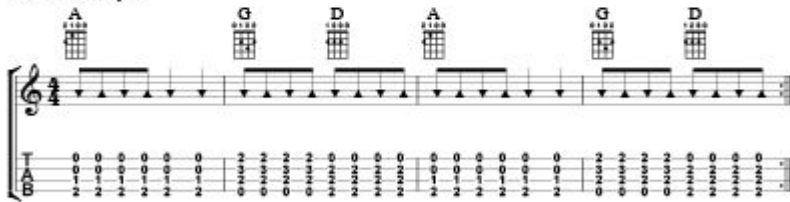
Musical notation for Chord Family 1 in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The bass clef staff shows the corresponding fret numbers for the guitar strings. Chord diagrams are provided above the staff for C, Am, F, G, C, Am, F, and G.

Chord Family 2



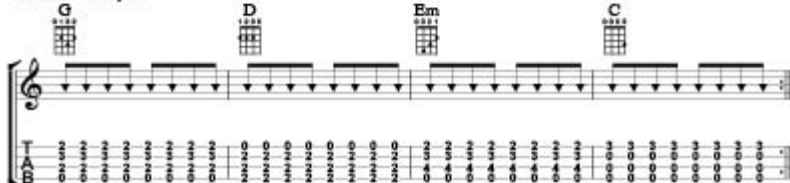
Musical notation for Chord Family 2 in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The bass clef staff shows the corresponding fret numbers for the guitar strings. Chord diagrams are provided above the staff for Dm, Gm, and A7.

Chord Family 3



Musical notation for Chord Family 3 in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The bass clef staff shows the corresponding fret numbers for the guitar strings. Chord diagrams are provided above the staff for A, G, D, A, G, and D.

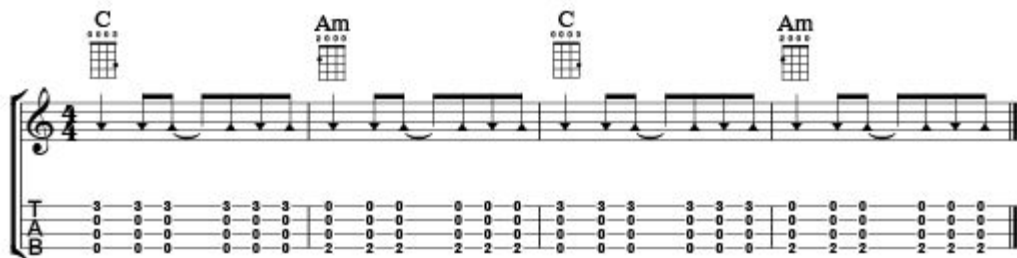
Chord Family 4



Musical notation for Chord Family 4 in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The bass clef staff shows the corresponding fret numbers for the guitar strings. Chord diagrams are provided above the staff for G, D, Em, and C.

More Interesting Strumming Patterns

To give your strumming pattern a bit more ‘groove’ we can look at ‘pushing’ some of your strums across beats. The following pattern is an incredibly popular pattern used by players in all genres. It may help you to say the pattern as you’re playing it. Try to put a small breath in just after your first ‘*UP*’.



The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The melody consists of quarter notes: C4, E4, G4, A4, G4, E4, C4, A4, G4, E4, C4, A4, G4, E4, C4, A4, G4, E4. Above the staff, four chord diagrams are shown: C (x02321), Am (x02020), C (x02321), and Am (x02020). Below the staff, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the fingerings for the notes: C (3-2-3), E (3-3-3), G (0-0-0), A (0-0-0), G (0-0-0), E (0-0-0), C (0-0-0), A (0-0-0), G (0-0-0), E (0-0-0), C (0-0-0), A (0-0-0), G (0-0-0), E (0-0-0), C (0-0-0), A (0-0-0), G (0-0-0), E (0-0-0). The bass line consists of quarter notes: C2, E2, G2, A2, G2, E2, C2, A2, G2, E2, C2, A2, G2, E2, C2, A2, G2, E2.

Your strumming patterns will develop naturally. The more you play the more you will fall into the most natural way of playing any given rhythm.

Try making up your own strumming pattern using a combination of *UP* strokes and *DOWN* strokes.

Loosen up when strumming but always keep the main beats of the bar clear. Tapping your foot helps.



Higher Notes Further Up The Fretboard

Now lets learn some higher single notes. The F major scale goes above the 3rd fret of the A string right up to the high 'F' on the 8th fret. When you get to the 'D' note on the 5th fret shift your left hand up the fretboard so finger 1 plays the 5th fret note and fingers 3 and 4 play the 7th and 8th frets respectively. Finger 3 then jumps down to 3rd fret to close the scale off as it began. These are known as *position changes*.

The F major scale



Now try playing *Drunken Sailor* and make sure your left hand shifts position smoothly.



Drunken Sailor

Dm
2 1 0

C
0 0 0 0

The first system of music is in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7. The bass clef staff contains a bass line with fret numbers: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 1 0 | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 3 0 0 3.

Dm
2 1 0

C
0 0 0 0

Dm
2 1 0

The second system of music is in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7. The bass clef staff contains a bass line with fret numbers: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 3 6 | 3 0 3 0 | 2 2.



London Bridge Is Falling Down

The image shows a musical score for the song "London Bridge Is Falling Down" in 4/4 time, key of G major. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tablature staff is labeled with 'T' for the top string and 'A/B' for the bottom strings. Chord diagrams for G, D7, and G are provided above the staff. The first system has four measures: Measure 1 (G chord, notes 6-7-6-3), Measure 2 (D7 chord, notes 2-3-6), Measure 3 (D7 chord, notes 0-2-3), and Measure 4 (G chord, notes 2-3-6). The second system has three measures: Measure 1 (G chord, notes 6-7-6-3), Measure 2 (D7 chord, notes 0-6), and Measure 3 (G chord, notes 2-3).

To play *Treetop Blues* smoothly you have to place your left hand in position 5. This means your 1st finger covers all notes on fret 5 (with finger 2 covering fret 6, finger 3 on fret 7 and finger 4 on fret 8). Note the natural sign before the F in bar 2, 4 & 8. This tells you to play the normal F at fret 8 not the sharpened one as shown in the key signature.

Treetop Blues

G

T
A
B

D7 C G

T
A
B



Playing With A Friend

The ukulele is a great instrument to play when there are two players. The chords for the following pieces are written above the tune. If you get the chance, try playing the tune along with a friend or teacher playing the chord part. Then try swapping. Watch out for the ‘skipped’ rhythm in some of the bars. A dotted quarter note lasts for 1 and a half beats.

Oh! Susanna

Chord diagrams: C (0002), G7 (0213)

Chord diagrams: C (0002), G7 (0213), C (0002)

Chord diagrams: F (0132), C (0002), G7 (0213)

Chord diagrams: C (0002), G7 (0213), C (0002)



Scarborough Fair

Chord diagrams: Dm, C, Dm

Chord diagrams: G, Dm

Chord diagram: C

Chord diagrams: Dm, C, Dm



More On Musical Structure

Along with repeat marks, there are other ways to help us go back through certain parts of a piece of music. ***D.C. al Fine*** shown below means ‘go back to the beginning and finish when you see the word *Fine*.’ ***D.C.*** is an abbreviation for the Italian ***Da Capo*** which means go back to the beginning/start again and ***Fine*** means ‘end’.

All Things Bright And Beautiful

The musical score for "All Things Bright And Beautiful" is presented in four systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:** Chords C, F, C, D⁷, G⁷. Tablature: 3-0-1-0 | 3-0-0-0 | 2-2-2-0 | 3-
- System 2:** Chords C, F, C, G⁷, C. Tablature: 3-0-1-0 | 3-0-0-0 | 3-3-0-2 | 0-0-0-0. An annotation "play this note 1st time only" with an arrow points to the final note of the melody. The word "Fine" is written at the end of the system.
- System 3:** Chords G, D⁷, G, D⁷, G. Tablature: 2-3-3-2 | 3-3-0-0 | 2-3-3-2 | 3-4-
- System 4:** Chords Am, D⁷, G⁷. Tablature: 0-2-3-3 | 2-3-0-0 | 2-0-2-0 | 3-||. The instruction "D.C. al Fine" is written at the end of the system.

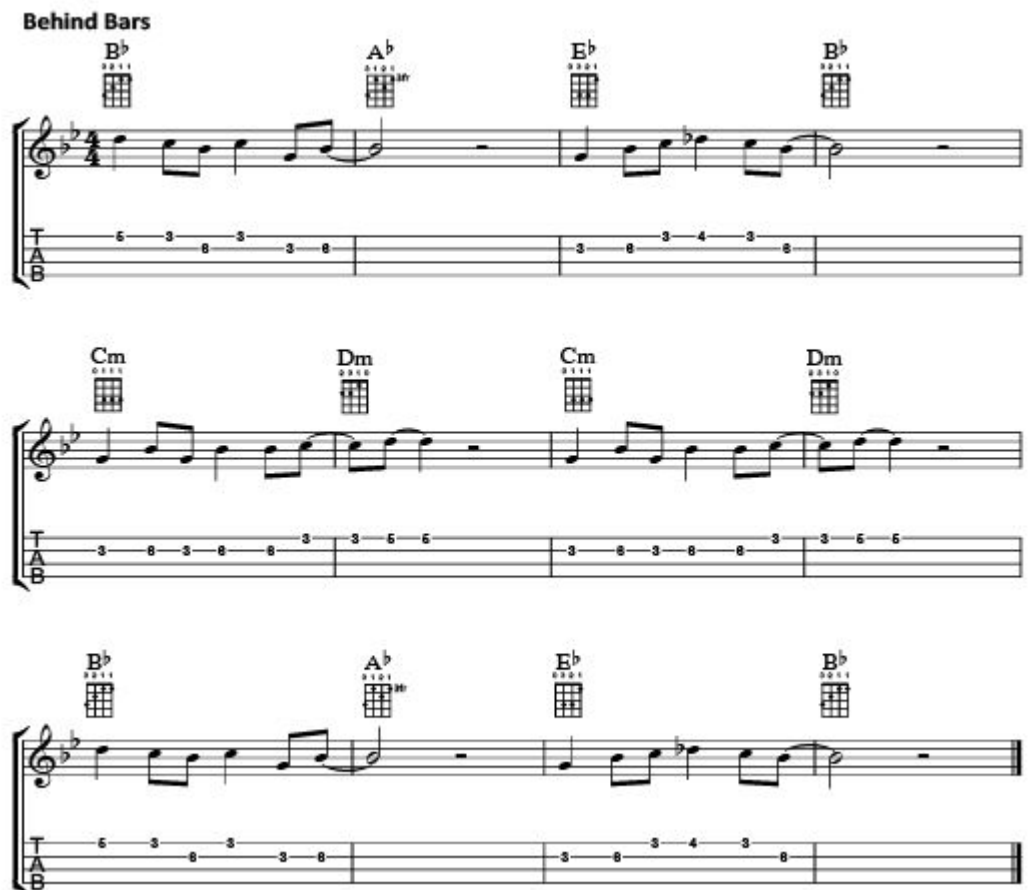
Bar Chords

Bar chords are when you need to use the 1st finger of your left hand to fret more than one string in your chord. The finger lays across the strings and pushes down like a bar.

If your chord is higher up the fretboard a *fret indication* is used to tell you at which fret you need to play your chord (see the A chord below).

The melody is played at the 3rd position and includes some 'pushed' eighth note patterns.

Behind Bars



The image displays three musical staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The first staff is titled "Behind Bars" and features four bar chords: Bb, Ab, Eb, and Bb. The second staff features four bar chords: Cm, Dm, Cm, and Dm. The third staff features four bar chords: Bb, Ab, Eb, and Bb. Each staff includes a melody line and a bass line with fret numbers. The bass lines for the first and third staves are identical, while the second staff has a different bass line. The melody lines consist of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some notes marked as "pushed" (indicated by a small 'p' above the note).

CHORD DICTIONARY

Song books for most instruments will include chord names. The following types of chords: Major, Minor, Seventh and Minor Seventh have all been included in this chord dictionary. Minor Seventh chords have a lovely jazzy sound. Try using them instead of a Minor chord.

This should enable you to pick up almost any music book and play any of the songs inside. All you have to do is find the chord listed in the following pages, use the fingering shown and play through the song.

Remember when reading chord names you may come across sharp or flat chords not listed in the this chord dictionary. This is because sharps have an equivalent flat which is actually the same note. So:

A^b is the same as G^\sharp

B^b is the same as A^\sharp

D^b is the same as C^\sharp

E^b is the same as D^\sharp

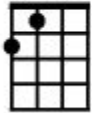
G^b is the same as F^\sharp

Try out your own strumming patterns or try fingerpicking through the chords. You will soon find the best approach for the song you're trying to play.

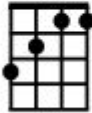


MAJOR CHORDS

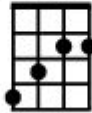
A
2 1 0 0



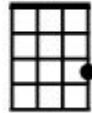
B^b
3 2 1 1



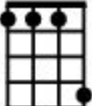
B
3 2 1 1



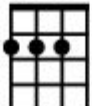
C
0 0 0 3




C[#]
1 1 1 4




D
1 2 3 0



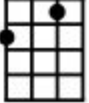
E^b
0 3 2 1



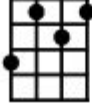
E
2 3 4 1



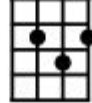
F
2 0 1 0



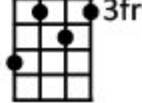
F[#]
3 1 2 1



G
0 1 3 2

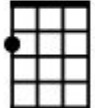


G[#]
3 1 2 1 3fr

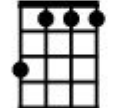


MINOR CHORDS

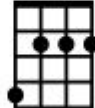
Am
2 0 0 0




B^bm
3 1 1 1



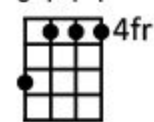
Bm
3 1 1 1



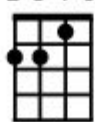
Cm
0 1 1 1



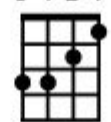
C[#]m
3 1 1 1
4fr



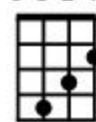
Dm
2 3 1 0



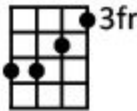
E^bm
3 4 2 1



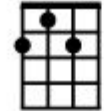
Em
0 3 2 1



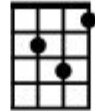
Fm
3 4 2 1
3fr



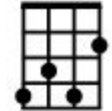
F[#]m
2 1 3 0



Gm
0 2 3 1

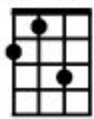


G[#]m
3 2 4 1




SEVENTH CHORDS

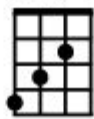
A⁷
2 1 3 0



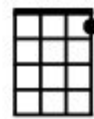
B^{b7}
1 2 1 1



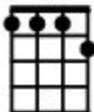
B⁷
3 2 1 0




C⁷
0 0 0 1




C^{#7}
1 1 1 2




D⁷
2 0 3 0




E^{b7}
1 1 1 2




E⁷
1 2 0 3



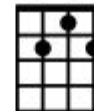
F⁷
2 3 1 3



F^{#7}
2 3 1 3



G⁷
0 2 1 3

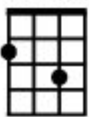


G^{#7}
1 3 2 4




MINOR SEVENTH CHORDS

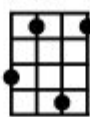
Am⁷
1 0 3 0




B^bm⁷
3 1 4 1



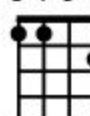
Bm⁷
3 1 4 1 2fr



Cm⁷
3 1 4 1 3fr



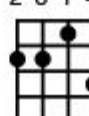
C[#]m⁷
3 1 0 1



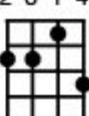
Dm⁷
2 3 1 4




E^bm⁷
2 3 1 4 2fr




Em⁷
2 3 1 4 3fr



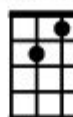
Fm⁷
1 3 1 4



F[#]m⁷
1 3 1 4



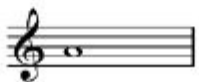
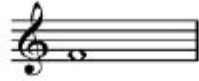
Gm⁷
0 2 1 1



G[#]m⁷
1 4 2 3



Quiz: Name That Note





Quiz: Name Parts of the Ukulele

Fretboard Strings Nut Bridge
Headstock Body Frets Tuning Pegs
Soundhole Neck

