

DO NOT OPEN THIS EBOOK

if you love being BORED, STRESSED & GLUED *to the sofa.*



WARNING!
SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE:

ENLARGED
SOCIAL CIRCLE

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VivaUkulele.com

Learn to play the UKULELE and you'll feel like you've had a personality transplant!

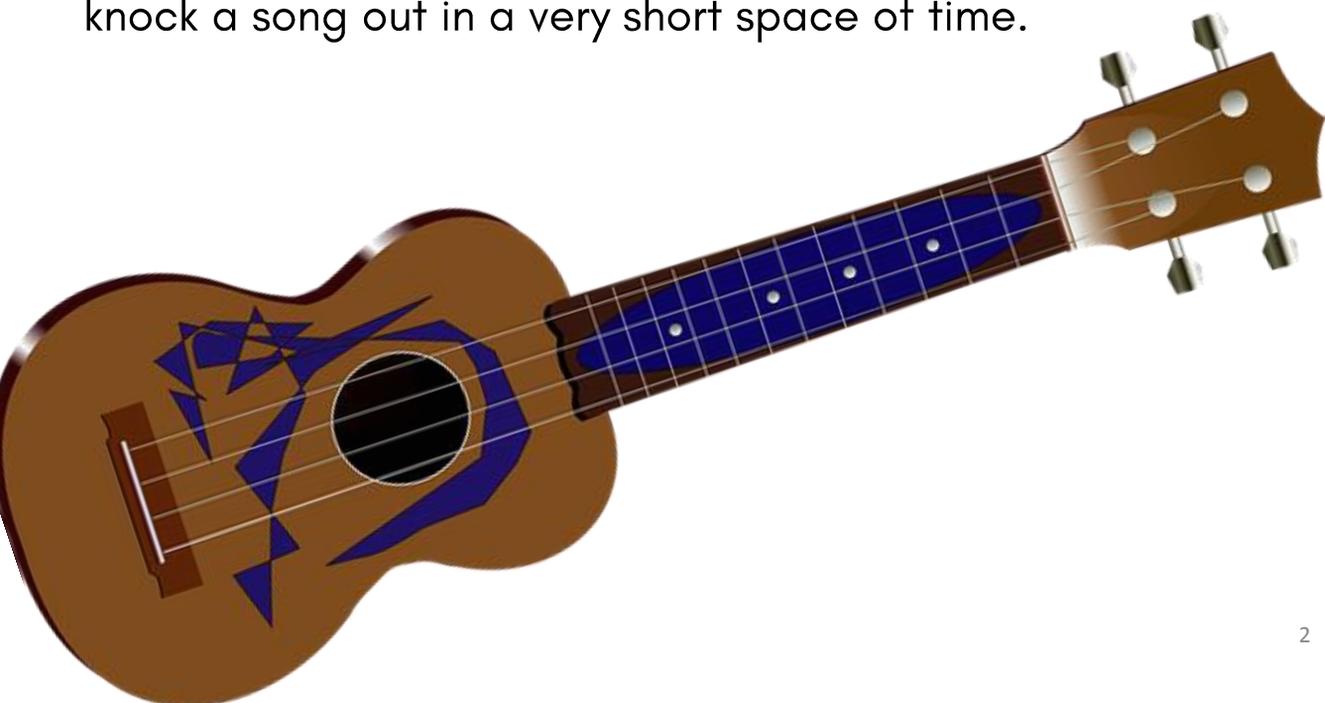
**You want to play the ukulele?
That's fantastic, prepare to be**

OBSSESSED!

This fun little instrument can lead to: a life-long love affair, a happy outlook, sore fingers, new friends and an addiction to collecting different types, sizes and colours of ukuleles (officially pronounced *ooh-koo-leh-leh*).

This manual is not going to teach you all about music theory or demand that you learn to read music, it will show you how to play a few songs without years at university and a Grade 7 qualification in Music.

Everyone has their own strengths with the ukulele, some are naturals, some have to work at it but ultimately, ANYONE can knock a song out in a very short space of time.





Hello, I'm Stephanie

AND I LOVE THE UKULELE!

During the summer of 2014, I decided to learn to play an instrument and thought the ukulele would be a good one to try.

By October I'd found a local ukulele class and went along one Saturday.

The teacher strapped me up with a little black Mahalo ukulele, gave me a song-sheet and said:

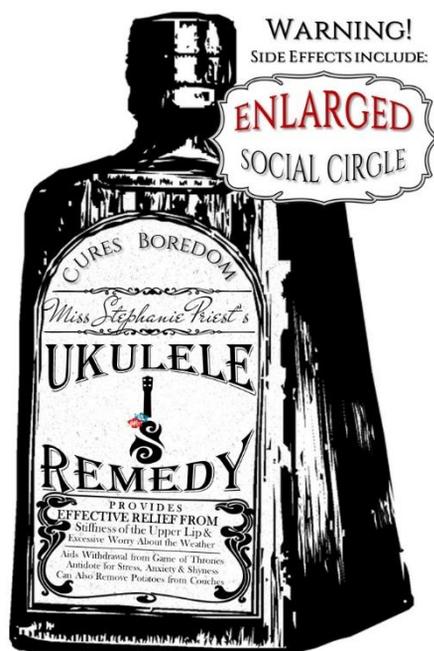
"This is how you play the C chord, this is how you play the F chord, just follow the lyrics and chords on the sheet and hit the C or the F whenever you can!"

And that was me, hooked!

Playing the ukulele has **tons** of benefits

- Age doesn't matter, you are NEVER too old to learn the uke, one of my students is 76!
- Size does NOT matter, there's a ukulele to suit every player.
- It's affordable, seriously cute, compact and much easier to transport than a piano!
- It ALWAYS makes people smile.
- Music is GOOD FOR YOU! It helps to raise your immune system, boosts dopamine and serotonin (your happy hormones) and reduces cortisol (your stress hormone).
- Learning something new keeps your brain ticking.
- It gets you out and about meeting people.
- At the very least, your fingers get a bit of exercise!

**It's not music...
it's MEDICINE!**



Why **I** love my ukulele!

I've discovered a new-found love of music and my **confidence** has increased in many more areas of my life, not just with playing the uke.

I've made **new friends**, performed in public (and if you can do that you can do ANYTHING) and I get to share my passion with others - like you 😊

My main reason for playing and continuing to learn ukulele is for **fun and enjoyment**, I love learning new techniques (like George Formby's syncopated style...err yeah that's still a work-in-progress!) and playing new songs.

And with the uke you can play about with music genres like playing a rock song in a jazz style, it's brilliant fun!

I mean, I'm not talking X Factor here or being the next Jake Shimabukuro (have a look at his TED Talk for amazing playing!) but, how far you want to take your learning and playing is entirely up to you.



SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...

OK, the first thing you need:



AN UKULELE

Ukuleles can range from just a few pounds in a charity shop to thousands of pounds for a hand-made, bespoke instrument.

Kala, Mahalo, Ashton...they're all pretty decent starter ukuleles and a strap can help too as they can be slippery little suckers!

You *MAY* want to invest in a new set of strings, it all depends if the strings on the uke keep the tone.

Very cheap ukes from bargain stores tend to be fitted with dire strings but, most ukes, even very cheap ones sound a LOT better with a decent set of strings.

If you do decide to get your uke re-strung, most smaller music stores will provide this service or you could have a go yourself. The ever helpful YouTube can help.

You might also want a music stand and a tuner. Optional but useful.

Above all, you need an open mind, a good sense of humour and a bit of patience.

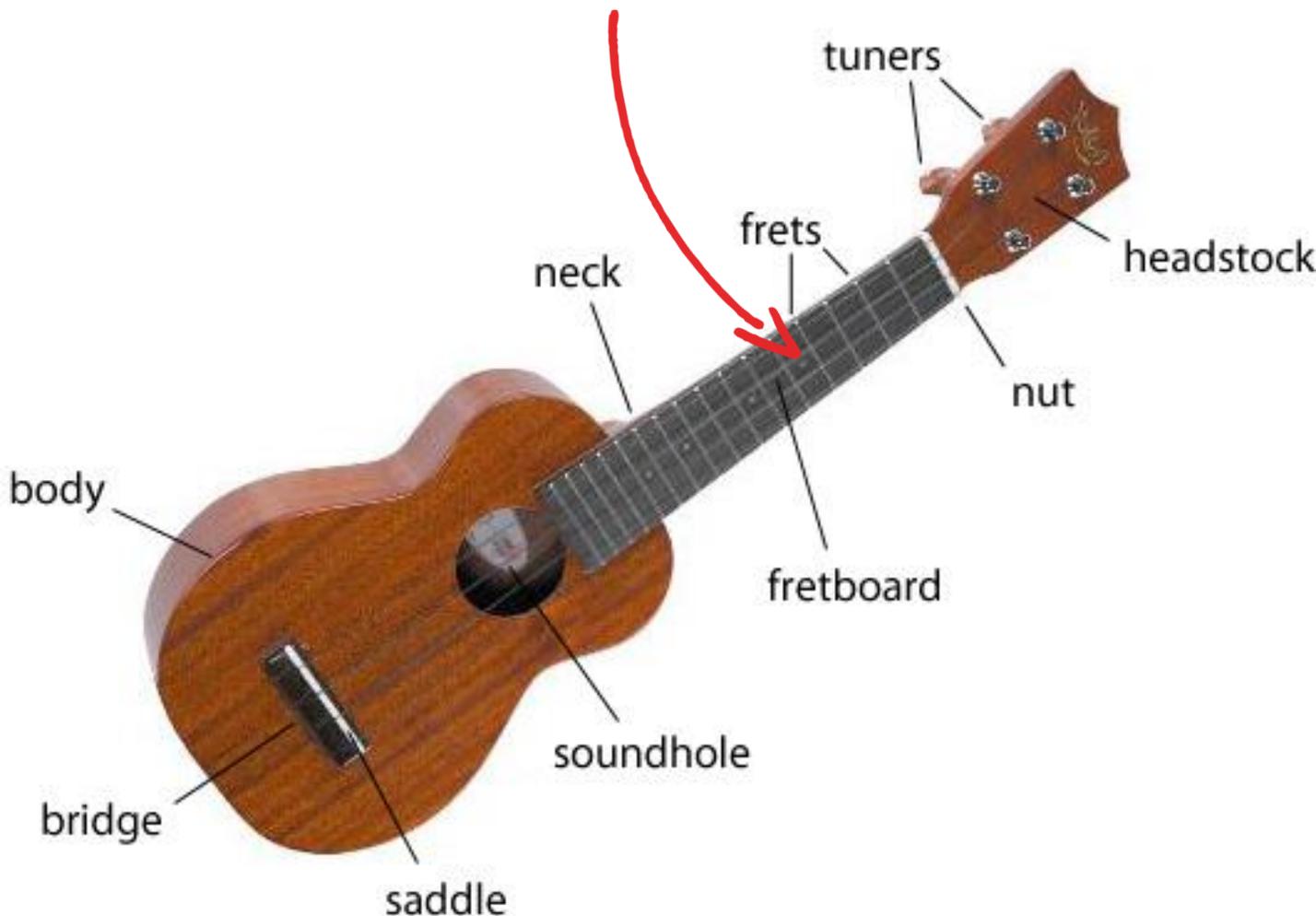


Your Ukulele

Let's have a look at your new baby..er..ukulele!

We'll only look at the key points that will enable you to play. If you want to learn more, that's a whole other book!

Generally, each finger corresponds with a specific section of fretboard (the gap **between** the metal frets). This is where you place your fingers to play chords by pressing on the strings.

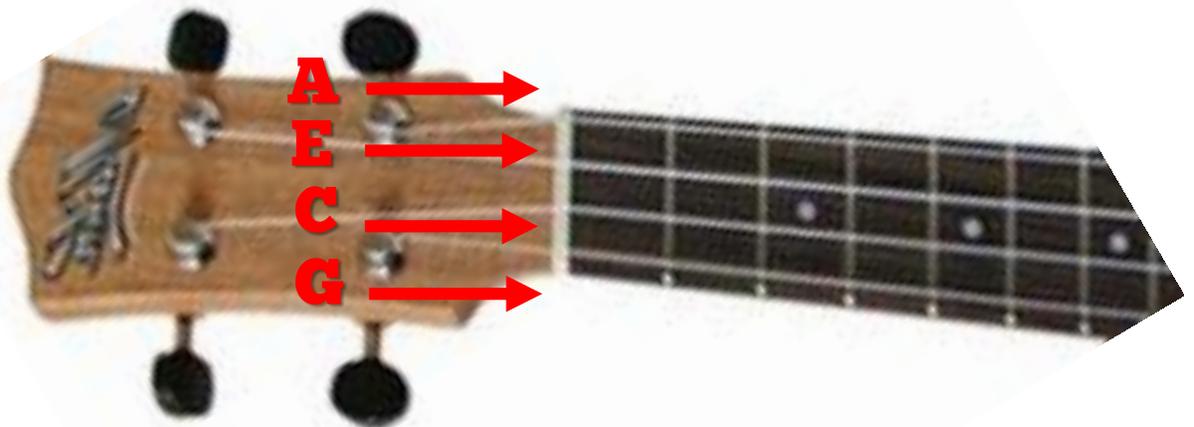




Strings

Most ukuleles are tuned to the key of C and right now, the main reason to know this is for setting your electronic tuner, that's all.

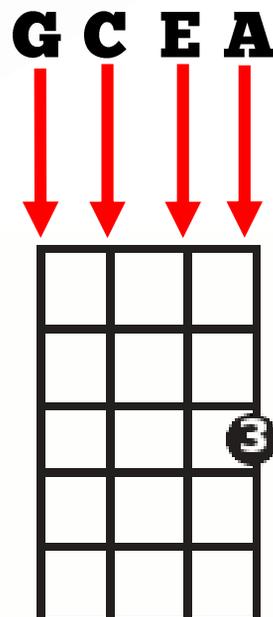
Now, let's look at the strings. Replicate the first image here by laying your ukulele flat on your lap. Let's name your strings, the string closest to your body should be **G**, followed by **C**, **E** and **A** being the string furthest away from your body.



And this is how they are represented in a lot of songsheets

Being able to identify these strings will you learn and practice new chords but, I often refer to them by a number or by "top string", "bottom string etc".

You'll find a way that works best for you.



This will play the chord of 'C'



Tuning

It's VERY important that your uke is in tune or your playing will sound dreadful no matter how good your strumming, knowledge of chord finger positions etc.

Tuners are available in different forms:



Ukulele tuning pipes



Electronic Tuner



Tuning App

Temperature and humidity affects your ukulele so it may need regular tuning during your playing session or moving it from one location to another.

Try them out for ease of use, budget etc and go for one that suits your needs best.



*No, not THAT
kind of tuna!*



The other thing you need...

Guess what, having an ukulele means you're only halfway to making music. You need YOU, too.

You, yes you are part of the instrument, without you, your ukulele goes un-played and that is too sad!

*The sole purpose of your ukulele's existence is **to be played.***

I promise you that your ukulele will not mind if you muddle your Majors and minors.

It will not care one jot if you sing along with your playing and sound more like a badly scalded tom-cat than a purring kitten.

And even if after 6 months you still playing just 3 chords, it will play them for you without question or judgment.

Your ukulele will love you unconditionally no matter how you play (or sing)...as long as you play it!

Your ukulele's role is to make sound!



Holding your Ukulele

It is said that ukuleles are meant to be played without a strap and supported by the crook of your elbow and your forearm.

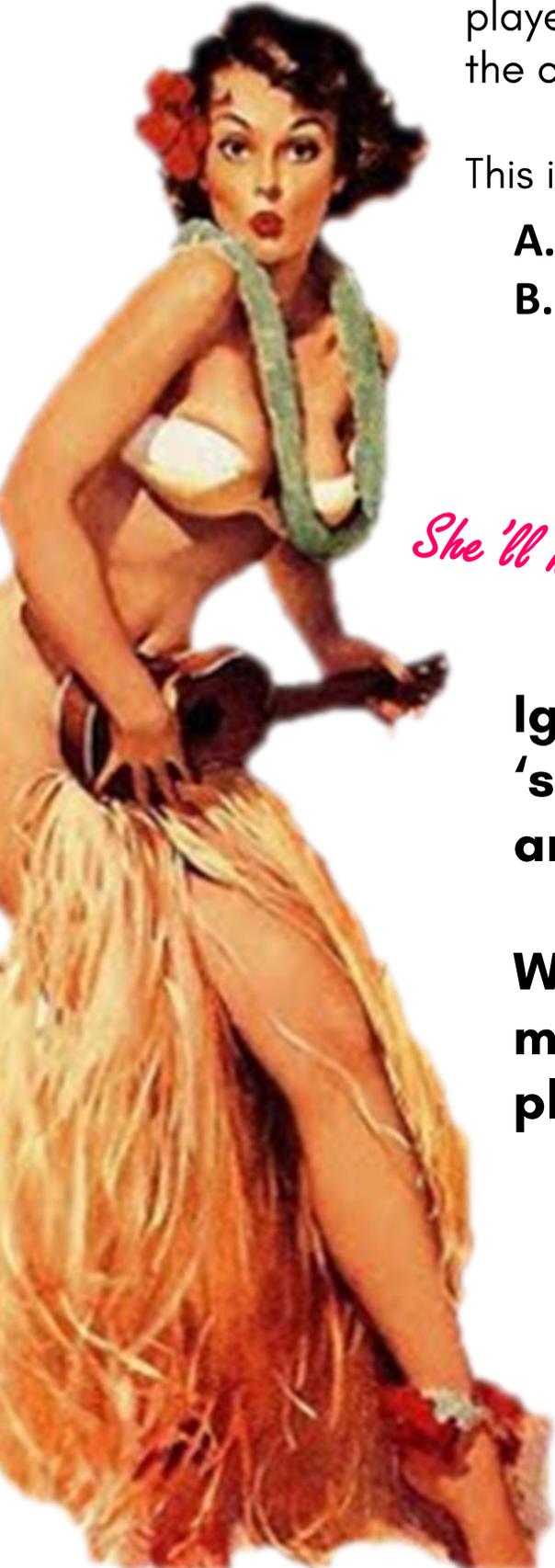
This is easier said than done when:

- A. Your ukulele is very shiny**
- B. You have boobage!**

She'll never reach the G string like that!

Ignore people who say you 'shouldn't' use a strap, they are NOT you.

Whatever makes it easier and more comfortable for you to play your ukulele, go for it.





Support

If you do go for a strap, **try the different styles out first.**



A traditional guitar style strap is my personal favourite as it means I can physically and mentally let go of the ukulele letting me concentrate on my playing!

Plus, I can make a cup of tea between songs without taking my uke off!



Some straps loop over your shoulder and only support the neck of the ukulele.

Other straps hook into the sound hole but, can drop easily if you let go completely.

To strap or not to strap, it's entirely your choice.



Posture

In the early stages of your learning, I encourage you to sit up straight or stand up where you can.

Lounging around puts too much weight on your hands and restricts your movement.

When you're more comfortable and competent, you can be a couch potato and play lying down!





Practice

You may take to the ukulele like the proverbial duck to water but, you may not. Don't despair...just keep practicing.

There may be times when your neighbours think you're teaching your dog to sing but, let them think that, you're having fun!

Even if you have to bash out the chords, strum like a misfiring car and sing along like a banshee, it will sink in, I promise.

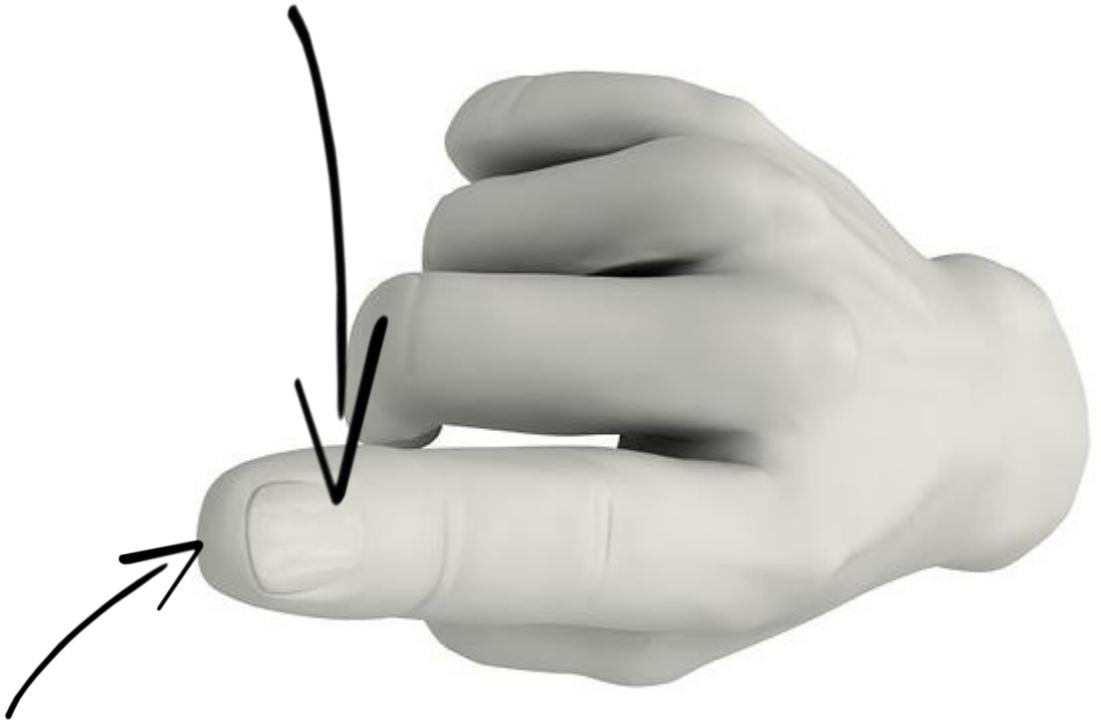
Our brains love habits so as long as you keep going, your brain will pick up what you learn.





Strumming

The DOWN strum is best done by using the back of the forefinger, stroked firmly from the direction of your nose to the floor! Don't worry if it's more like the side of your finger that strums, that's OK.



The UP strum uses the fleshy part of your finger where your fingerprint is!

Of course, it's much easier to demonstrate this than to describe it so have a look at my Youtube channel!



Strumming

Super important...RELAX!

Keep your wrist **loose**, stiff limbs will sound hard.

Imagine shaking water off your hands or shaking maracas! That's how loose you should be to get a great sound from your ukulele



Now, **stroke** your finger down across the strings, DOWN strums and UP strums in a rhythmic beat, down and up sequence.

Sometimes you'll need to strum firmly, sometimes merely skirting the surface of the strings, sometimes dampening (muting the sound) with your hand (this is called 'chunking')

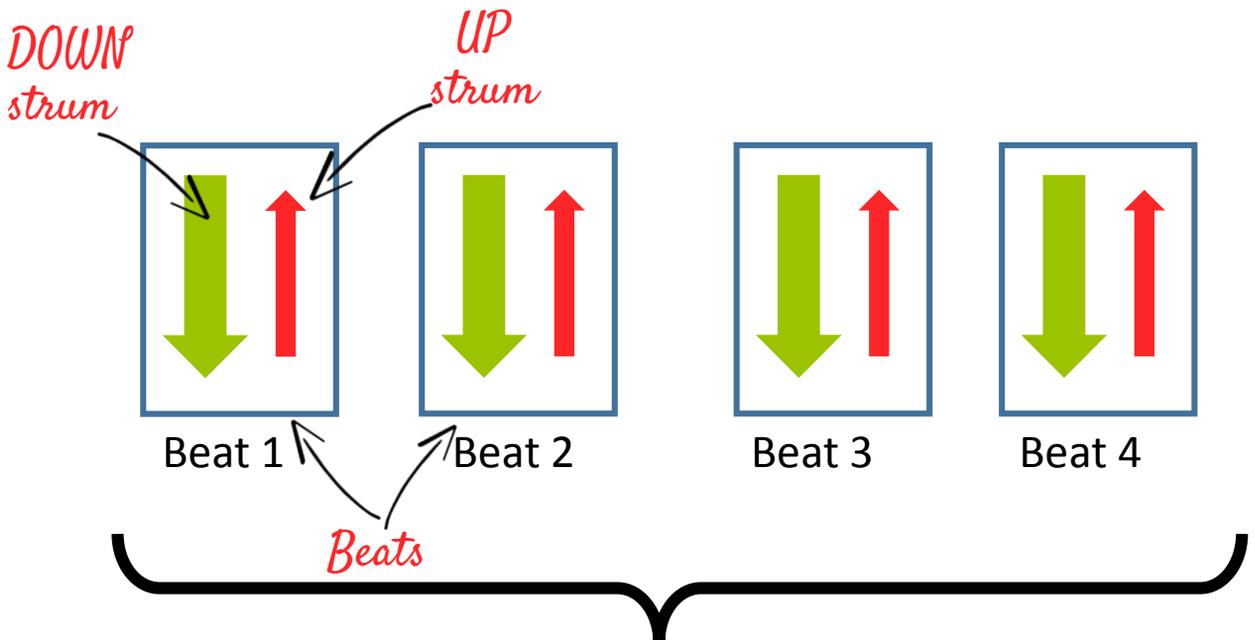
It all depends on the music style, song, genre...



Beat & Bars

Generally, we play songs set to a 'bar' (a measure of musical time). This example is 4 **beats** to a **bar**. Sometimes shown as 4/4.

Each **beat** is measured in Downstrokes **AND** Upstrokes (or DOWN strums and UP strums)



A 4/4 bar (measure)

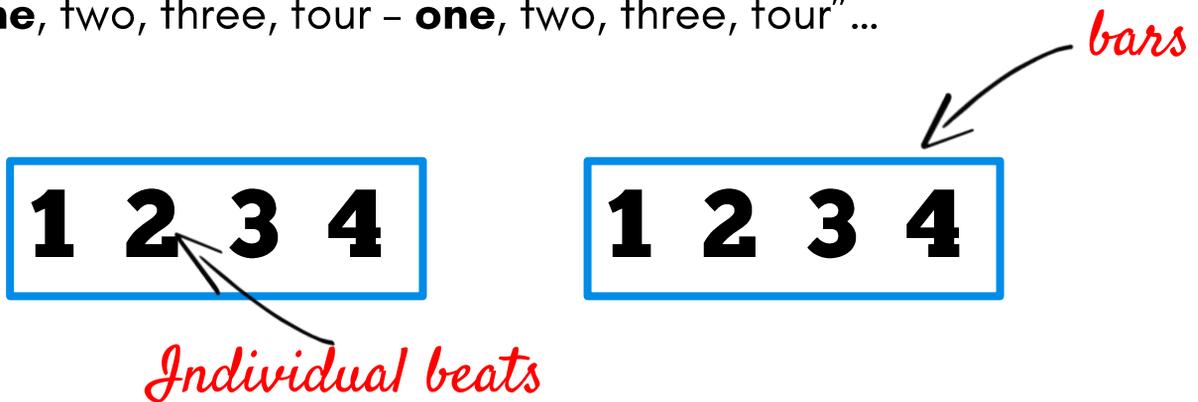
To get the best out of your ukulele, you'll learn to create emphasis on the down and up strums by adding subtle pressure and timing to the strokes you make when you strum.



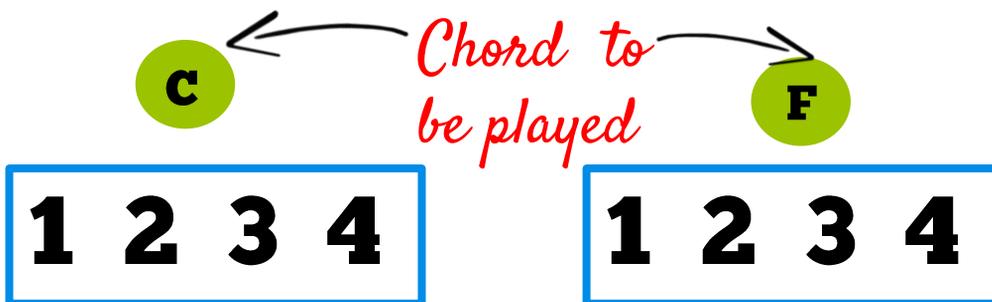
Beat & Bars

You use **beats and bars** to count the music and drive the song forward, it sounds like this:

“**one**, two, three, four – **one**, two, three, four”...



When you add chords and lyrics you get your song!



On this simplistic example 'C' chord is played for 4 beats (4 DOWN/UP strums)

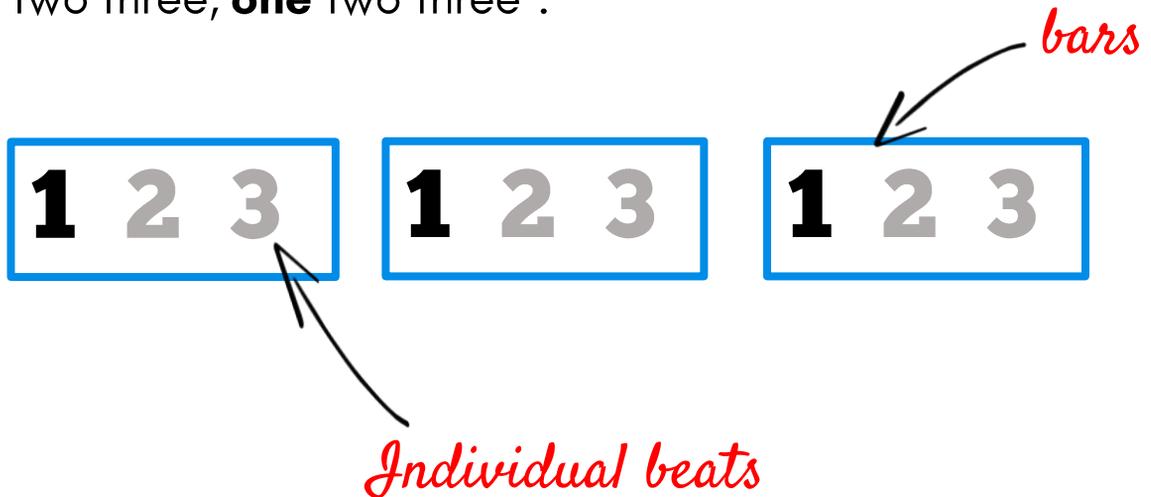
Followed by the 'F' chord (4 DOWN/UP strums)



Beat & Bars

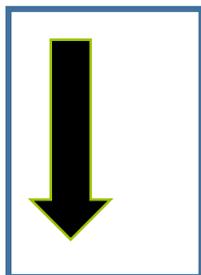
There are many songs which are 3/4 timing, this means 3 **beats** to a **bar** – like a waltz. You would count it like this:

"**one** two three, **one** two three".



The example suggests emphasis on the **FIRST** beat of each bar: "**ONE**, two three **ONE**, two, three".

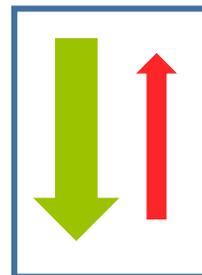
To help me understand how to play the different beats, especially when learning new strumming patterns, I associate the beats to words, maybe it will help you too.



TEA
(DOWN)



Cof-fee
(down-up)



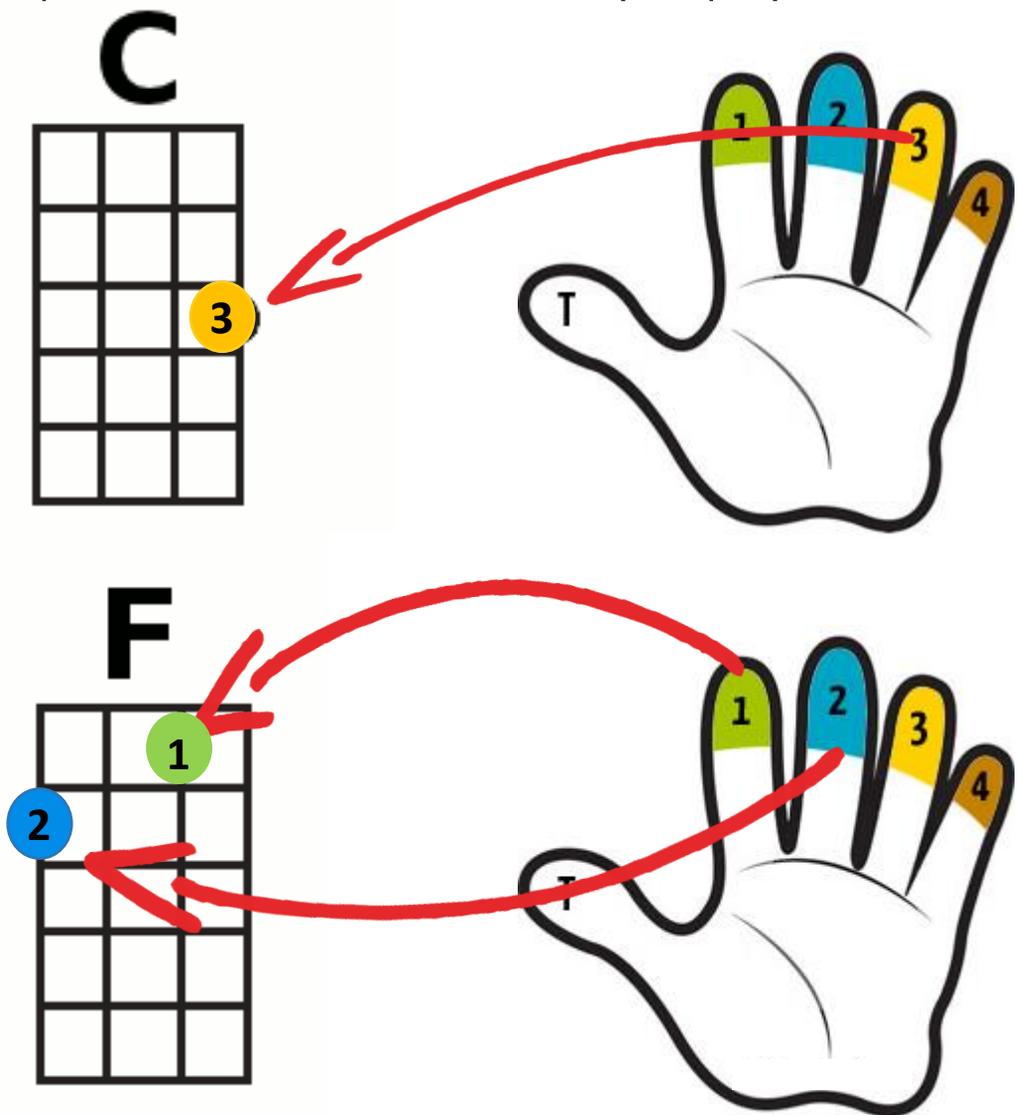
Cof-fee
(down-up)



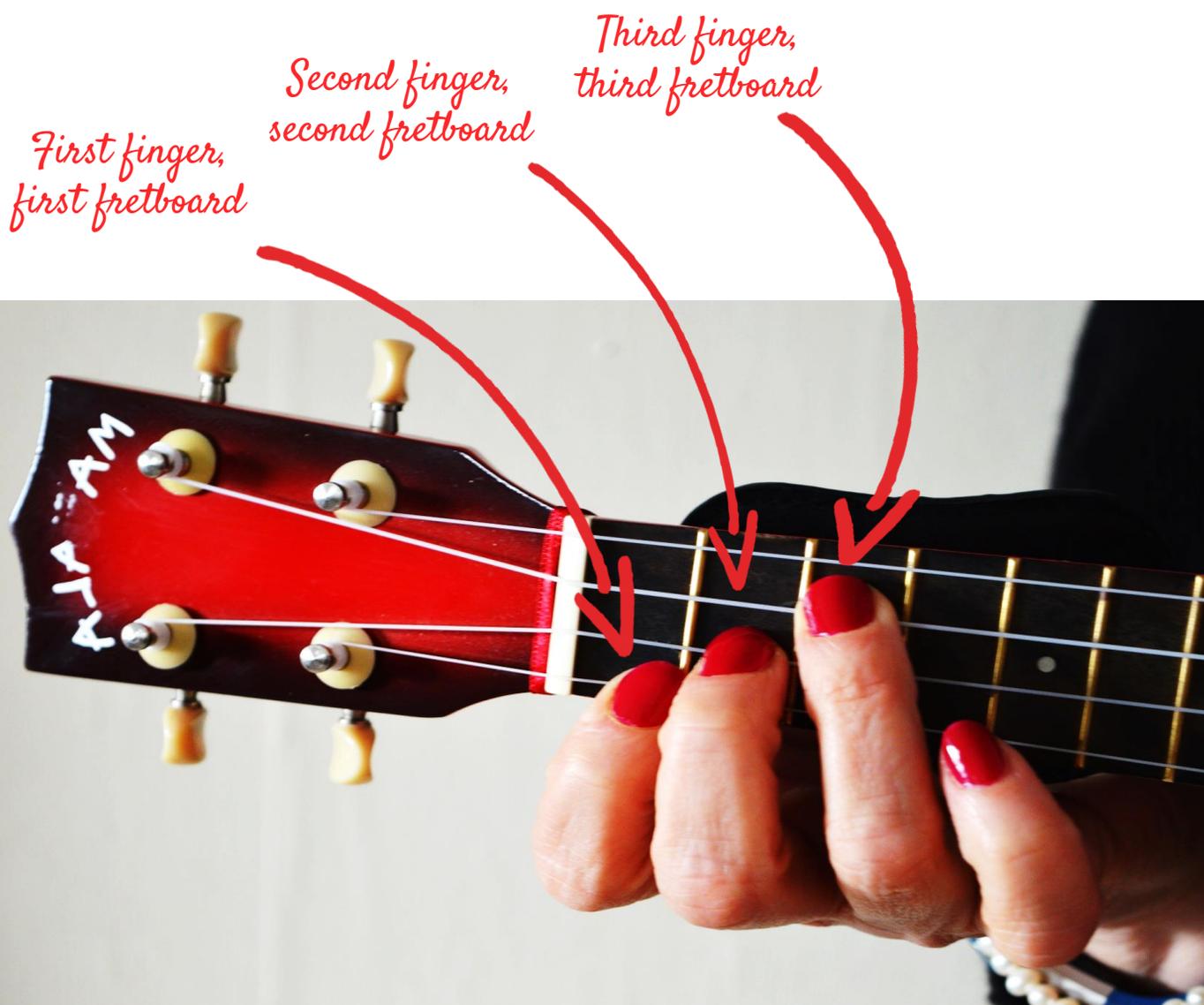
Finger Positions

The chord diagrams tell you which finger to place where. Sometimes chord diagrams have numbers telling you which finger to use on the string/fret.

In my experiences, these are NOT SET IN STONE! They are simply a guide, most make sense to play as suggested, sometimes you need to improvise and find a better way to play FOR YOU.



OK so essentially, for most of the basic chords, each finger 'resides' in a particular area of the fretboard. But, some chords need 2 or more fingers on one area and of course, as with most things in life, there are lots of inconsistencies!



Whilst chords have a basic, standard, guide for each finger position, occasionally you will need to change them to play certain chords or to make the transition from one chord to another a little easier. No biggie, I can show you how 😊



Chord Diagrams

On phonetic song-sheets with chord names and lyrics, you may also find chords diagrams. These diagrams show chord names and the corresponding **finger position** on the ukulele.

SUNNY

Bobby Hebb

[4/4]

[Am] Sunny, [C] yesterday my [F] life was filled with [E] rain, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] you smiled at me and [F] really eased the [E7] pain.
Now the [Am] dark days are done and the [C] bright days are [C7] here,
[F] my sunny one [Dm/7] shines [E7] so sincere,
[Bm7] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

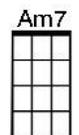
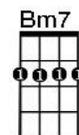
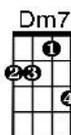
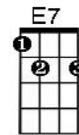
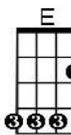
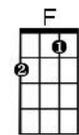
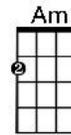
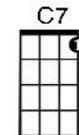
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] sunshine [E] bouquet, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] love you brought my [E7] way.
You [Am] gave to me your [C] one and [C7] all,
and [F] now I feel [Dm/7] ten feet tall.
[Bm7] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] truth you let me [E] see, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] facts from A to [E7] Z.
[Am] My life was torn like-a [C] windblown [C7] sand, then a
[F] rock was formed when [Dm7] we held hands.
[E] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for that [F] smile upon your [E] face, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for that [F] gleam that flows from grace. [E7]
[Am] You're my spark of [C] nature's [C7] fire,
[F] you're my sweet complete [Dm/7] desire,
[E] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you.
[F] ooh, ooh [E] I love [Am] you
[F] ooh, ooh [E] I love [Am] you
[F] ooh, ooh [Am7]

Finger Position

Chord name



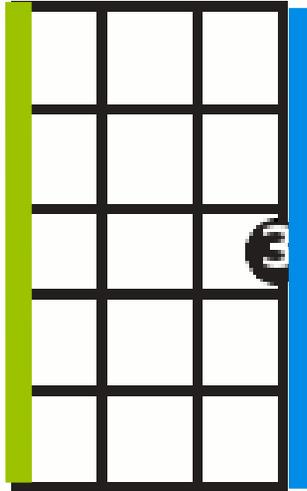


Translating Diagrams

We'll use these colour coded models to learn how to read them. The instructions assume you are holding your uke as if to play it.

C

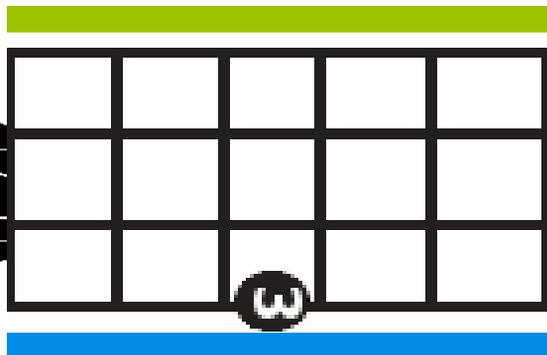
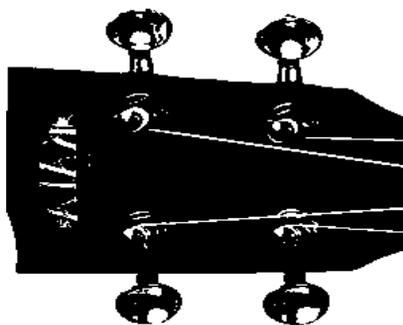
This side represents the edge of the neck of your ukulele which is closest to your chin



This side represents the edge of your uke which is closest to the floor

Let's flip it around.

Ok, so now this is a **MIRROR IMAGE** representation of your ukulele as shown in the chord diagram.



This green edge is closest to your chin

This blue edge is closest to the floor

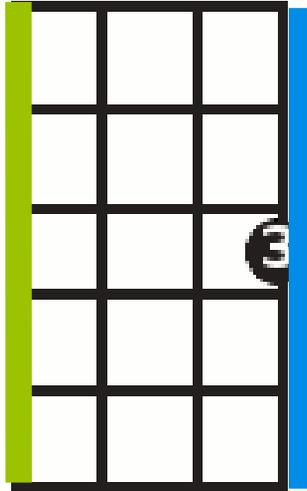


Translating Diagrams

This version is showing you a different perspective.

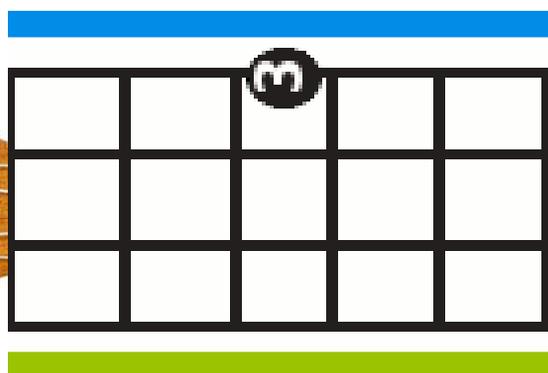
C

This side represents the edge of the neck of your ukulele which is closest to your chin



This side represents the edge of your uke which is closest to the floor

This is a **BIRDS EYE VIEW** or **POINT OF VIEW (POV)** representation of your ukulele. The view you should have when **looking down** at your ukulele when you tilt the neck towards you.



This blue edge is closest to the floor

This green edge is closest to your chin

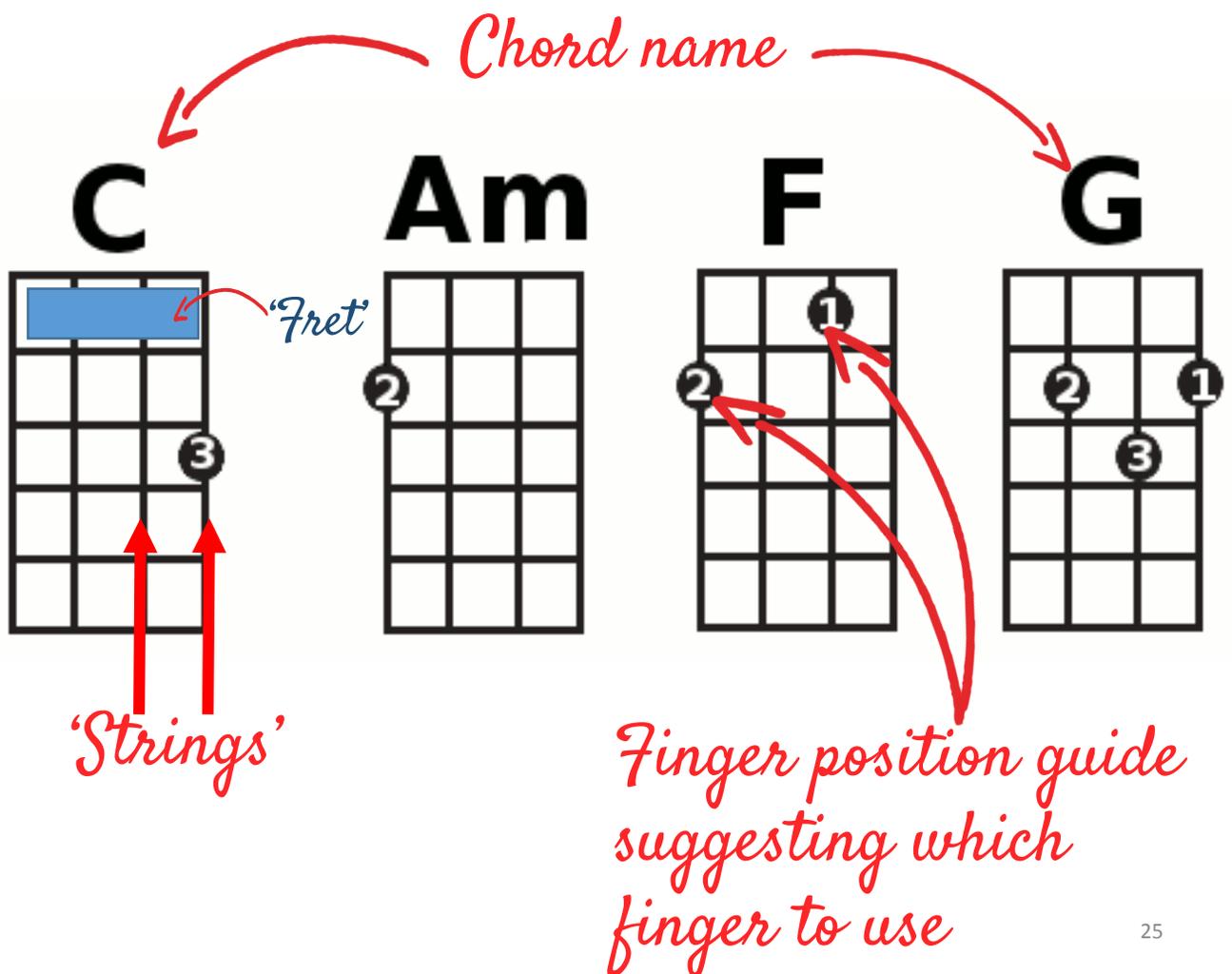


Reading Chord Diagrams

There's quite a lot of information going on but, it's all really useful and easy to read with practice.

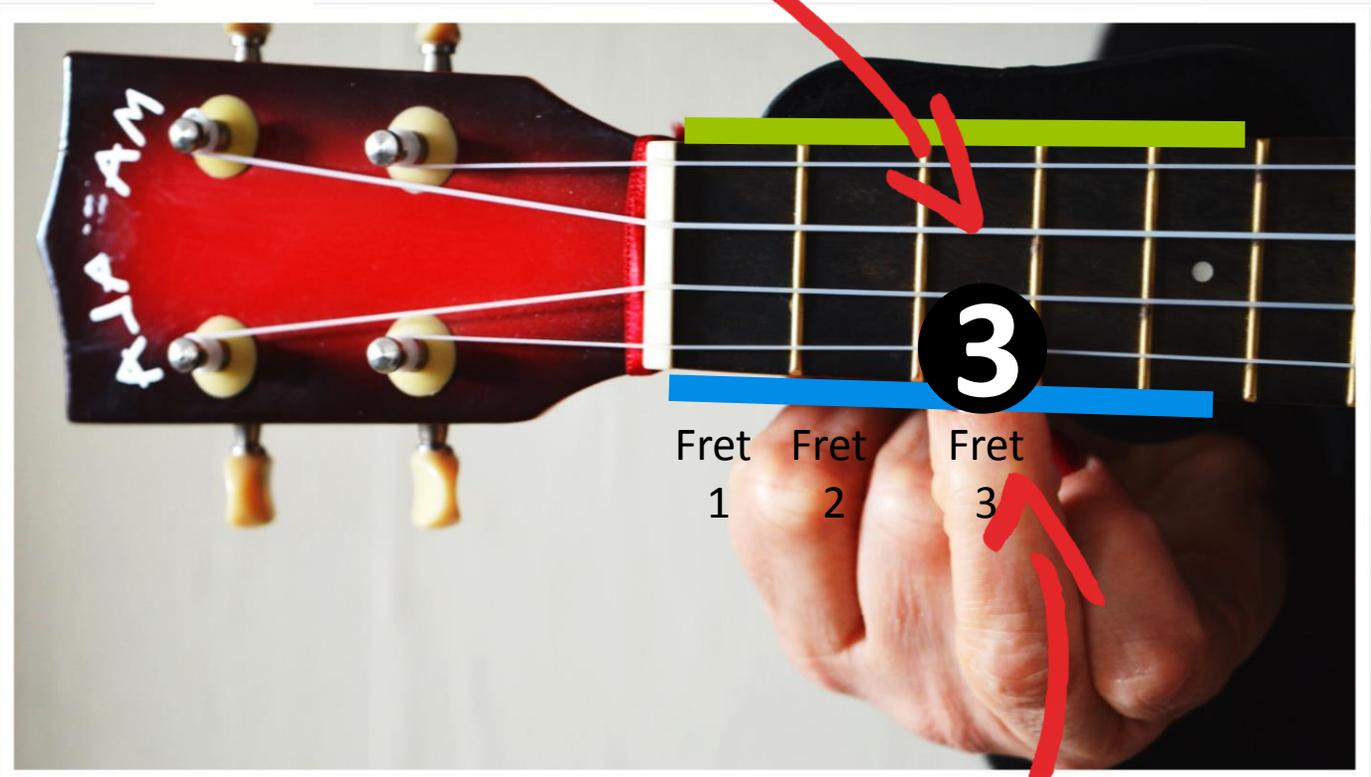
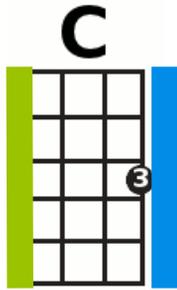
Whatever any 'expert' tells you, finger positions are NOT finite, they provide a standard guide to help you form the chord.

I often use short-cuts when a song contains complex chords positions or for moving easily from certain chords to another.





Forming Chords from the Diagrams



*Finger number
and position*

This means:

- Place your **THIRD FINGER**
- on **THIRD** space BETWEEN the frets (the metal strips)
- On the bottom string (A string) the string closest to the floor)

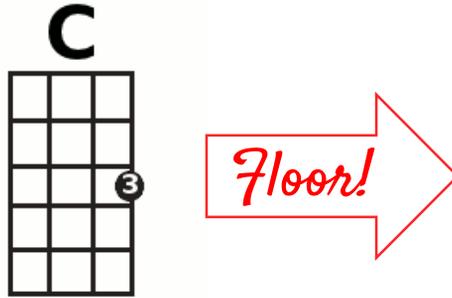
Of course, it's much easier to follow using my videos! ¹⁶



Basic Chords – C (Major)

So, as you now know, each chord has a position.

This is the position for C (Major).



1. Place your THIRD finger
2. In the THIRD fretboard
3. On the bottom string (the 'A' string – closest to the floor)



Have a go at strumming this chord.



Basic Chords – F (Major)

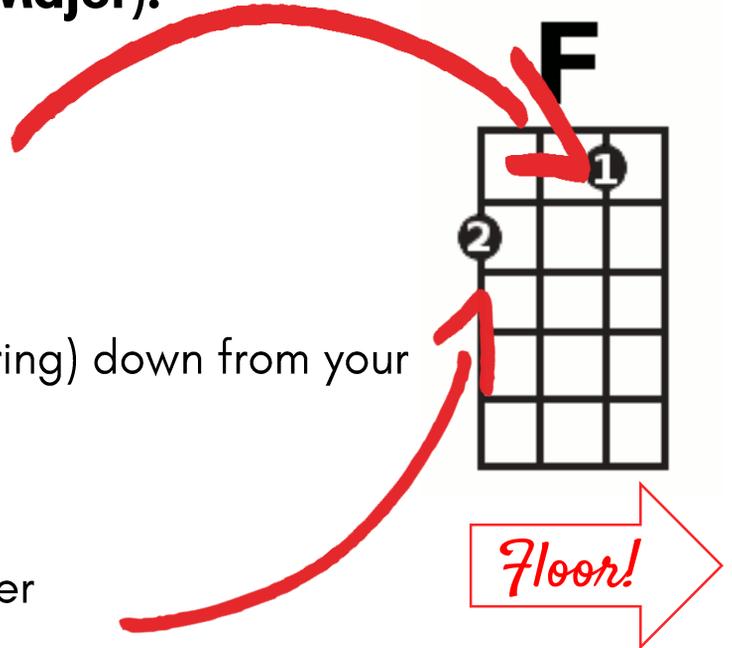
This is the chord of F (Major).

FINGER 1

1. Place your FIRST finger
2. In the FIRST fretboard
3. On the THIRD string (E string) down from your chin

FINGER 2

1. Place your SECOND finger
2. On the SECOND fretboard
3. On the TOP string – closest to your chin (G string)





Basic Chords - G7

This is the chord of G7

FINGER 1

1. Place your **FIRST** finger
2. In the **FIRST** fretboard (gap)
3. On the **THIRD** string down (E string)

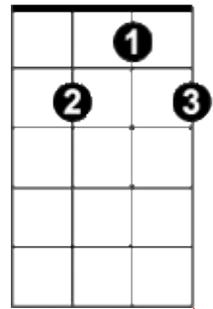
FINGER 2

1. Place your **SECOND** finger
2. On the **SECOND** fretboard
3. **SECOND** string down from your chin (C string)

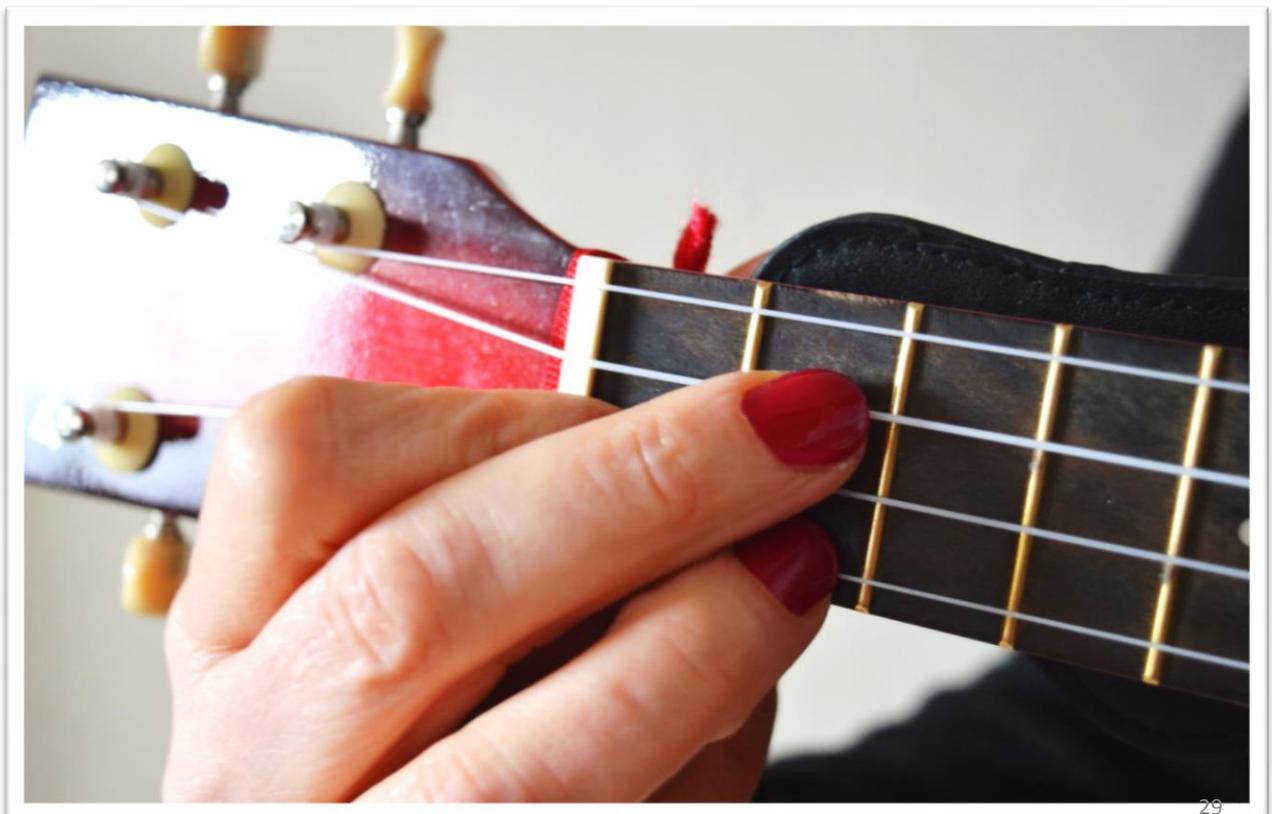
FINGER 3

1. Place your **THIRD** finger
2. On the **SECOND** fretboard
3. On the **BOTTOM** string - closest to the floor (A string)

G7



Floor!





Songs

Fantastic, you've learned 3 chords, basic principles of beats, bars and strumming.

Next, the songs.

Ukulele songsheets can vary but they usually show the lyrics and the chords.

As we are not reading sheet music which tells you how many beats to play and what rhythm style, it is **really important** and **extremely useful to know the song** as you will see...

Now let's put it all together and play some tunes...





Song-sheets

Lots of ukulele song sheets are written phonetically like this one, this is what makes ukulele fun, you don't need years of music theory.

The chords are shown in **RED**.

This is a really popular song so hopefully you know it!

C **F** **C** **F** **C** **G7** **C**
Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are.

C **F** **C** **G7** **C** **F** **C** **G7**
Up a - bove the world so high, like a diamond in the sky.

C **F** **C** **F** **C** **G7** **C**
Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are!

**No semi-quavers, notes or staves to interpret.
Pretty cool eh!**



By playing chords with the ukulele you're providing the **rhythm** of the song.

In the beginning of your ukulele journey, you might find separating the melody (the singing bit of the song) and lyrics from the rhythm a bit tricky.

One way to get around this is to listen to an instrumental or karaoke version or simply hum the tune.



Song-sheets

There are also these kind of easy-to-read song-sheets, the chords sit just in front of the lyrics and you have chord diagrams to help you.

SUNNY

Bobby Hebb

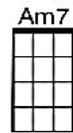
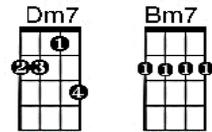
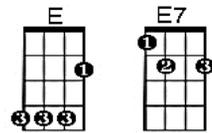
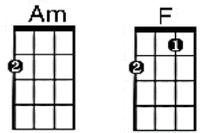
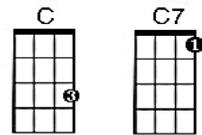
[4/4]

[Am] Sunny, [C] yesterday my [F] life was filled with [E] rain, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] you smiled at me and [F] really eased the [E7] pain.
Now the [Am] dark days are done and the [C] bright days are [C7] here,
[F] my sunny one [Dm/7] shines [E7] so sincere,
[Bm7] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] sunshine [E] bouquet, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] love you brought my [E7] way.
You [Am] gave to me your [C] one and [C7] all,
and [F] now I feel [Dm/7] ten feet tall.
[Bm7] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] truth you let me [E] see, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for the [F] facts from A to [E7] Z.
[Am] My life was torn like-a [C] windblown [C7] sand, then a
[F] rock was formed when [Dm7] we held hands.
[E] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you. [F] [E7]

[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for that [F] smile upon your [E] face, [E7]
[Am] Sunny, [C] thank you for that [F] gleam that flows from grace. [E7]
[Am] You're my spark of [C] nature's [C7] fire,
[F] you're my sweet complete [Dm/7] desire,
[E] Sunny, one so [E7] true, I love [Am] you.
[F] ooh, ooh [E] I love [Am] you
[F] ooh, ooh [E] I love [Am] you
[F] ooh, ooh [Am7]



These sheets are great but...many players don't break away from them and learn to play the song from memory. It takes time to learn new songs so be patient with yourself.



Let's Play

I know this is a kiddies song but, it's a great one to use the 3 basic chords of C, F and G7 and it has a simple rhythm.

For this example I've added the number of beats to strum for each chord just to start you off with the strumming.

Remember, each beat generally consists of a **DOWN + UP** stroke, you can use. As this is your first time, just strum "coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee".

C⁴ Twinkle, twinkle **F**² little **C**² star, **F**² how I **C**² wonder **G7**² what you **C**² are.

C² **F**² Up a - bove the **C**² world so high, **G7**² like a **C**² diamond **F**² in the **C**² sky. **G7**²

C⁴ Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are! **G7**² **C**² 1 single strum



CONGRATULATIONS!

You can play the ukulele



**There'll be
no stopping
you now!**

If you're itching to learn **more songs, chords and strumming patterns** and many more fun

ukulele-esque goodies hop over to vivaukulele.com for my online courses - grab a free taster course!



You'll get short, step-by-step videos and song sheet PDFs for each song. You'll have chord diagrams to download and keep, you'll have lifetime access to the resources.

Join my lovely email list for updates about new songs, new YouTube videos and live jam sessions.

Happy strumming dear friend

Stephanie xx



Learning



is simply a

JOURNEY.

It ends **ONLY** when
YOU want it to.



Have fun & **ENJOY**

EVERY SINGLE STEP!