

Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

by Curt Sheller

D
Tuning
A D F# B

*It's not as hard as
you think.*

Curt Sheller Publications

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Curt Sheller Publications

2050 Orlando Rd., Suite 101
Pottstown, PA 19464-2348

International Standard Book Number (ISBN)

ISBN 10: 1-60321-022-9

ISBN 13: 1-60321-023-7

Printed and bound in the United States of America

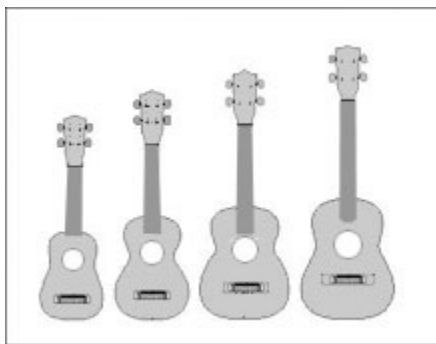
First Printing -



Introduction

Memorizing the notes of the ukulele fingerboard is not as hard as one would think. Although there doesn't seem to be any pattern and the same letter can be found on every string. There is a systematic approach that can be used to help remember the notes.

There are four different sized ukuleles in common use today, using any one of three different tunings.



Soprano

Concert

Tenor

Baritone





“D” Tuning

A Soprano, Concert and Tenor ukulele can all be tuned using “D” tuning. D tuning was a common tuning used in the early twentieth century. “D” tuning is still common in Canada and Europe.

Finally, and really learning and knowing the names of names of the notes of the ukulele fingerboard is liberating musical moment. A major breakthrough in most player’s learning and enjoyment of the ukulele.

Knowing the names of the notes of the fingerboard is separate from learning to read standard music notation. To learn to read music on the ukulele in “C” tuning, see my series of books: *Reading Music on Ukulele*.

Knowing the notes of the fingerboard is so important. That, I wrote this book to address that need.



Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



“D” Tuning

“D” tuning, both low and high “A” variations, is common on the Soprano, Concert and Tenor ukulele. When string four is tuned to a low “A”, it is referred to as a “Low A” tuning.



LOW “A” VARIATION



④

D

③

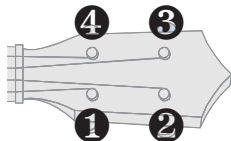
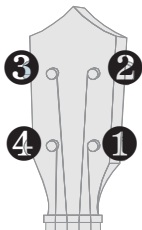
G

②

B

①

E



D Tuning

5



Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Key Frets

<i>open</i>	A	D	F#	B
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<i>fret (12)</i>	A	D	F#	B
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In addition to the open strings and fret twelve, which most ukulele players seem to remember. There are two other frets with no sharp or flat notes, frets (3), (5) and (10). These are easy to remember.

<i>fret (3)</i>	C	F	A	D
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<i>fret (5)</i>	D	G	B	E
-----------------	----------	----------	----------	----------

<i>fret (10)</i>	G	C	E	A
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These are *reference* or *key frets*. From these frets other frets can be derived.

6 Learning the Frets



Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



Frets (1), (2), (4), (6), (9) and (11) can be referenced relative to the open strings, fret (3), fret (5) and fret (10) by flattening or sharpening all the notes of those frets.

<i>open</i>	A	D	F#	B
<i>fret (1)</i>	A#*	D#	G	B#
<i>fret (2)</i>	Cb	Fb	Ab	Db
<i>fret (3)</i>	C	F	A	D
<i>fret (4)</i>	C#	F#	A#	D#

* See page 11 for enharmonic equivalent note spellings.





Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

fret (4) Db Gb Bb Eb

fret (5) **D** **G** **B** **E**

fret (6) D# G# B# E#

In addition to open string which has one sharp, frets (8) has one sharp as well.

fret (8) **F** **A#** **D** **G**

From fret (8) we can get fret (7) and fret (9).

fret (7) Fb A Db Gb

fret (8) **F** **A#** **D** **G**

fret (9) F# G D# G#



Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



That is every fret and note of the ukulele fingerboard in “G” tuning, low or high “D”. A lot easier with a system.

Review the frets ascending and descending; with sharps; with flats; mixed sharps and flats. Know the fingerboard inside and out.

Whether practicing or playing; reading or improvising; playing single notes or chords; no matter what style you are playing. **ALWAYS** know the notes you are playing. This will make the notes of the ukulele reflexive and second nature.





Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Other Common Ukulele Tunings

“C” Tuning

Fret (5) is the same as the open strings in “C” tuning.

<i>open</i>	G	C	E	A
-------------	----------	----------	----------	----------

“G” Tuning

Fret (7) is the same as the open strings in “D” tuning. D tuning was very common in the early part of the twentieth century. D tuning is common in Canada and Europe.

<i>open</i>	A	D	F#	B
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Enharmonic Equivalents

Enharmonic equivalents are where the same pitch can have multiple names. In other words, if two notes have the same pitch but are represented by a different letter name and accidental ($\sharp$ $\flat$ $\natural$) they are enharmonic.

Sharps to Flats

A $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **B $\flat$**

B $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **C**

C $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **D $\flat$**

D $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **E $\flat$**

E $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **F**

F $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **G $\flat$**

G $\sharp$ is the same pitch as **A $\flat$**





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Flats to Sharps

A $\flat$ is the same pitch as **G $\sharp$**

B $\flat$ is the same pitch as **A $\sharp$**

C $\flat$ is the same pitch as **B**

D $\flat$ is the same pitch as **C $\sharp$**

E $\flat$ is the same pitch as **D $\sharp$**

F $\flat$ is the same pitch as **E**

G $\flat$ is the same pitch as **F $\sharp$**



Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Sharp and Natural Notes



STRING	④	③	②	①
open	A	D	F#	B
1	A#	D#	G	C
2	B	E	G#	C#
3	C	F	A	D
4	C#	F#	A#	D#
5	D	G	B	E
6	D#	G#	C	F
7	E	A	C#	F#
8	F	A#	D	G
9	F#	B	D#	G#
10	G	C	E	A
11	G#	C#	F	A#
12	same as open strings one octave higher			





Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Flat and Natural Notes

STRING	④	③	②	①
open	A	D	G $\flat$	B
1	B $\flat$	E $\flat$	G	C
2	B	E	A $\flat$	D $\flat$
3	C	F	A	D
4	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	E $\flat$
5	D	G	B	E
6	E $\flat$	A $\flat$	C	F
7	E	A	D $\flat$	G $\flat$
8	F	B $\flat$	D	G
9	G $\flat$	B	E $\flat$	A $\flat$
10	G	C	E	A
11	A $\flat$	D $\flat$	F	B $\flat$
12	same as open strings one octave higher			





Word Search

Turns out there are a few words throughout the ukulele fingerboard that can aide in remembering the frets. Here are the fingerboard charts, without the frets.

Sharps & Natural Notes

<i>open</i>	A	D	F#	B
<i>fret (1)</i>	A#	D#	G	C
<i>fret (2)</i>	B	E	G#	C#
<i>fret (3)</i>	C	F	A	D
<i>fret (4)</i>	C#	F#	A#	D#
<i>fret (5)</i>	D	G	B	E
<i>fret (6)</i>	D#	G#	C	F
<i>fret (7)</i>	E	A	C#	F#
<i>fret (8)</i>	F	A#	D	G
<i>fret (9)</i>	F#	B	D#	G#
<i>fret (10)</i>	G	C	E	A
<i>fret (11)</i>	G#	C#	F	A#



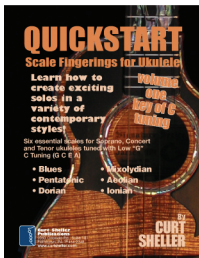


Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Word Search

	Sharps & Natural Notes			
open	A	D	G $\flat$	B
fret (1)	B $\flat$	E $\flat$	G	C
fret (2)	B	E	A $\flat$	D $\flat$
fret (3)	C	F	A	D
fret (4)	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	E $\flat$
fret (5)	D	G	B	E
fret (6)	E $\flat$	A $\flat$	C	F
fret (7)	E	A	D $\flat$	G $\flat$
fret (8)	F	B $\flat$	D	G
fret (9)	G $\flat$	B	E $\flat$	A $\flat$
fret (10)	G	C	E	A
fret (11)	A $\flat$	D $\flat$	F	G $\flat$





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Books available for C, G, and D Tunings

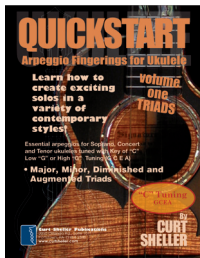
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Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



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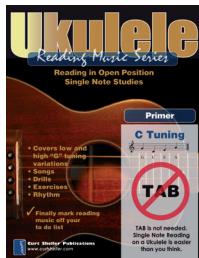
Master these fingerings and unlock your potential for improvisation.

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18 Related Ukulele Books





Ukulele Reading Series

Reading Music in Open Position, Single Note Studies- Primer

Reading music is not as hard as one might think. It may be new and unfamiliar but is not hard when you have a proper plan of attack.

Reading music on the ukulele is easier than reading music on guitar or piano. There are only four strings with a smaller range of possible notes.

Music in the key of C with all natural notes, no flats or sharps is pretty easy to play in open position on a ukulele. This would be the same as playing the white keys of a piano.

Standard music notation has been the Lingua Franco of musicians, both professionals and hobbyists for many centuries.

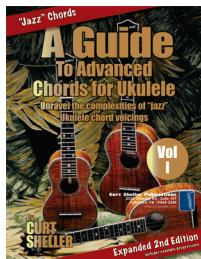
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