

The Ukulele Parts

Body, Neck, Head, Strings, Sound Hole, Tuners, Bridge, Frets, etc.

The Player Parts

You – your mind, ear and hands.

For your fretting hand, the fingers and fingertips play notes with the thumb supporting the fingers. The fingers are pressing the string to the fingerboard and the thumb needs to supply equal and opposite pressure in the *back* of the neck.

Your other hand strikes, strums or picks the strings to set things in motion, producing music.

Accessories

Books, strings, tuners, metronome, music stand, strap, tools, frequent flyer miles, loud Hawaiian shirts (required attire), etc.

Tuning - Re-entrant and linear

First - Be sure to ALWAYS play your ukulele in tune. Using an electronic tuner is the fastest and most accurate way to tune your ukulele.

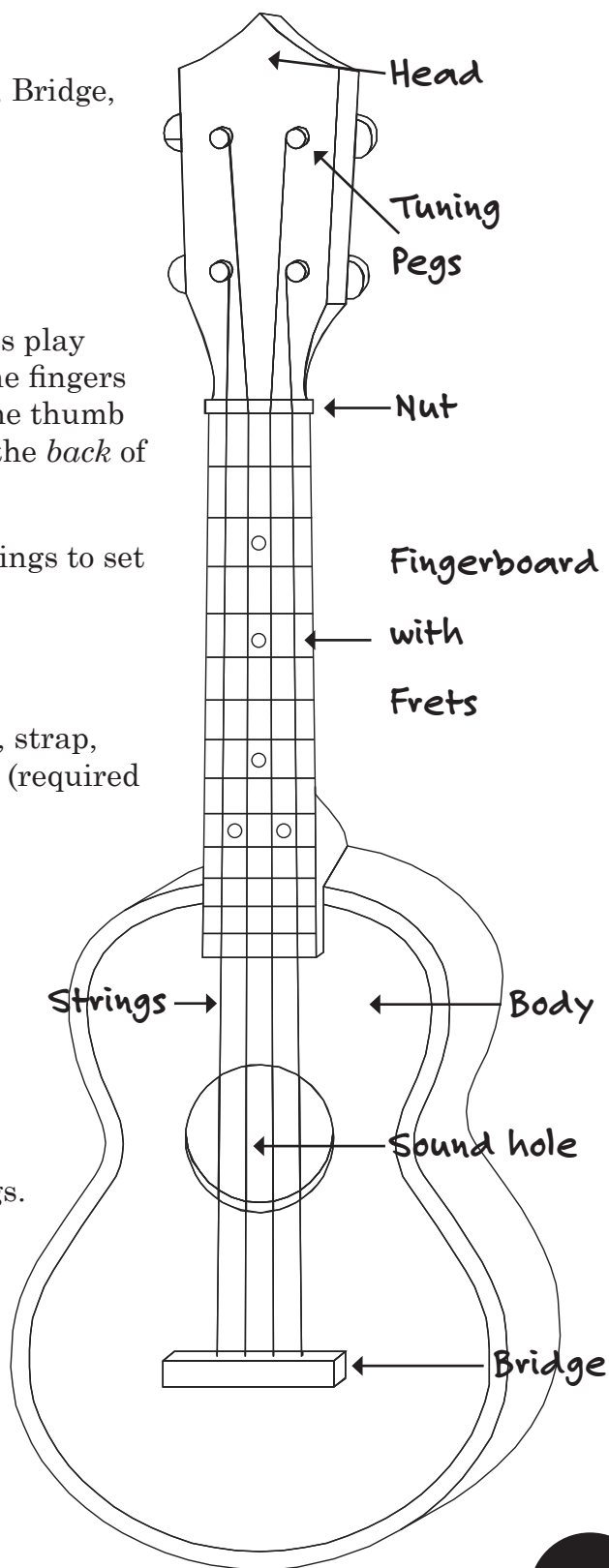
Common Tunings - C, D and G

Here are the three most common ukulele tunings.

C Tuning - G C E A

G Tuning - G D B E

D Tuning - A D F# B



"Core" Skills for Ukulele

Depending on your goals you might want to be able to do:

- 1) Chords for accompanying yourself or others singing
- 2) Strumming
- 3) Reading Music
- 3) Single Note Melodies
- 4) Improvising
- 5) Learning songs, creating a repertoire

You can take the ukulele to any level you would like.

Chords

Learn a "Core" Set of Basic Chords

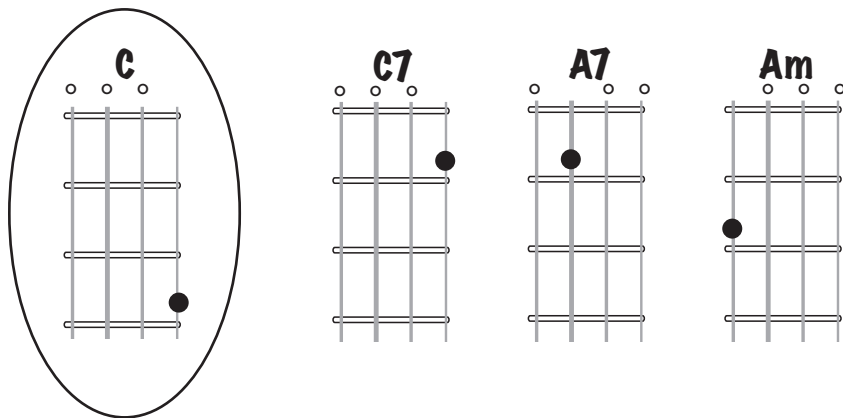
Most beginners learn chords based on what chords are needed to play a particular song. Simple two and three chord songs are the first songs most player use to learn the ukulele.

See the accompanying chart for basic chords in common song keys.

Your First Ukulele Chord - C Major or Just plain "C"

With a C chord needing only one finger to play and used in several common keys. It's no wonder C is the most common first chord a player typically learns.

Here are a few other basic chords that use only one finger.



Memorizing Chords

Pick a simple song and memorize at least one way to play each of the chords needed in the song.

Switching Chords

After chords are memorized, they are played in a particular sequence creating a song or chord progression. Each chord will occupy a set number of beats.

Using the order of the chords in the song. Practice switching between the chords using one stroke for each chord.

Strums

Strumming Chords

After you can successfully switch between chords, use a basic “four” beat strum and play the chords in order and for the number of beats required per chord.

A beat is what we typically respond to in music. We tap our foot or clap our hands to the *beat* while listening to a song. If you have ever danced, you are responding to the beat and the harmonic rhythm of the song.

A downbeat is the audible part of the beat. The up beat is half way between the up beat and the next downbeat and is not audible.

A Basic “Four” Strum

Chords and music are organized into bars or measures. For the Basic “Four” Beat Strum, the number of beats per bar or measure is four. This is the most common number of beats used on songs.

Using the basic four strum, every beat has two parts. a down part and an up part. If we are tapping our foot evenly, we hear the down part of the beat when our foot strikes the floor. The up part of the beat is when we are resetting our foot for the next down beat.

Counting evenly, count the down beats using 1 2 3 4 and the up beats with “and”, indicated with a plus sign below. This gives us: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +.

You can strum down on the downbeat (▼), the numbers and down or up on the up beat (▲ ▲), the “and” (+). For your basic four beat strumming pattern, strum up on the “and”.



Here is what the standard music notation for this basic four beat strum looks like.



Basic Four Beat Strum Variations

Remember to count evenly. This ensures you will be playing in tempo.

Strumming pattern



Standard Music Notation



These are just a few of the 72 possible, basic four beat strumming patterns.

Reading Music

Whether reading TAB or Standard Music Notation, reading music is understanding the written language of music.

This can be anything from reading simple, single note melodies in the open position on the ukulele to complex solo arrangements.

Reading music is: note recognition and execution, note location, fingering solutions, rhythm recognition and execution. It includes the ability to follow the “Roadmap” – a series of written instructions that move you from one section of a piece to another and indicates something of the interpretation of the piece.

Putting these together is reading. Putting these together without preparation – just as you would read a book or magazine – that’s sight reading!

See my book Reading Music on Ukulele - Primer

Improvising

Improvising is the art of spontaneous composition. For single note soloing, you need a core set of essential scales. For chord improvisation, you need multiple places on the ukulele that you can play any given chord

Learning Songs

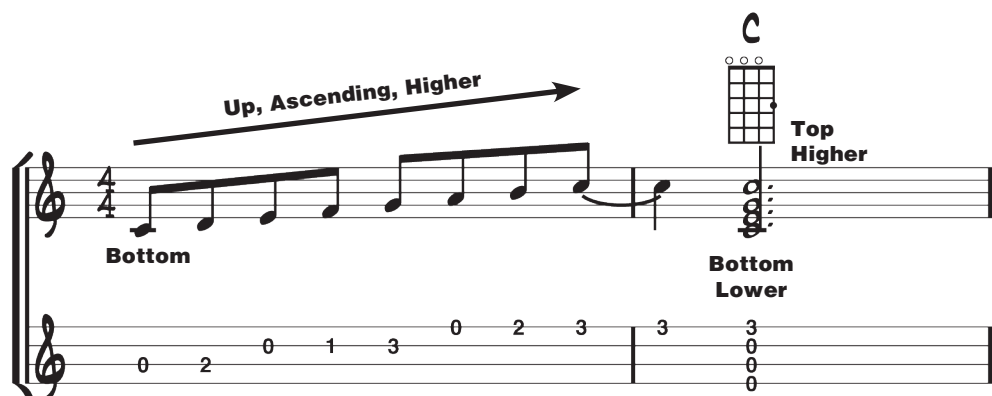
Learning songs and creating a personal repertoire is what music, learning and playing an instrument is all about. The song or composition is a recipe containing the ingredients that are needed to play the song, the notes, chords, scales, rhythm and arrangement. You supply the technical expertise and the feeling to pull it all together.

Which Way Is Up?

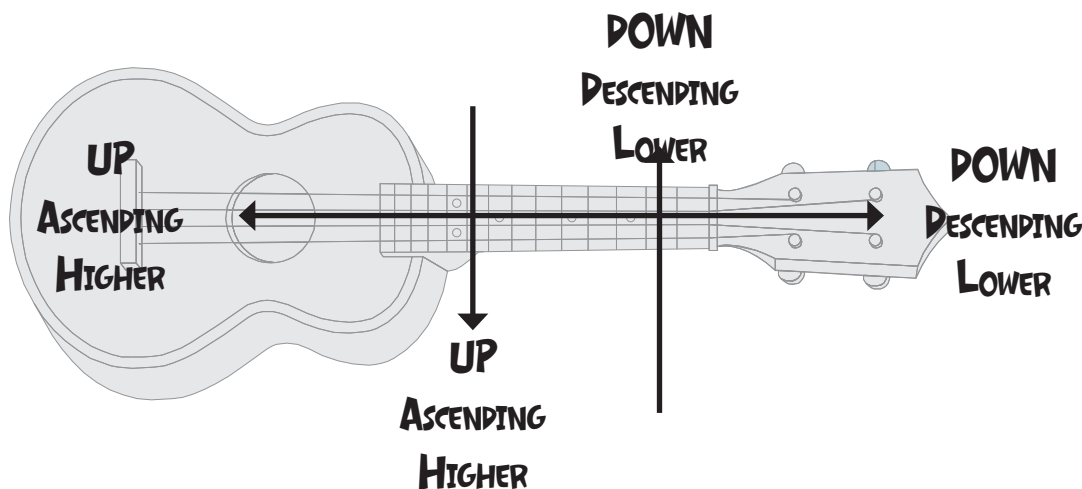
What is up, down, higher, lower, top, bottom, ascending, descending on a ukulele?.

Up, down, higher, lower, top, bottom, ascending, descending should refer to musical pitch and not be related to gravity as we know it. Up and higher refers to the raising of musical pitch and down and lower refer to the lowering of musical pitch. Top refers to the upper note of a chord voicing or musical phrase and bottom the lowest note.

These terms can be shown best using standard music notation.



The standard music notation also happens to show one of the problems with tab. Tab does not accurately show the ascending and descending nature of pitch or the contour of a musical line as well as written music notation can.

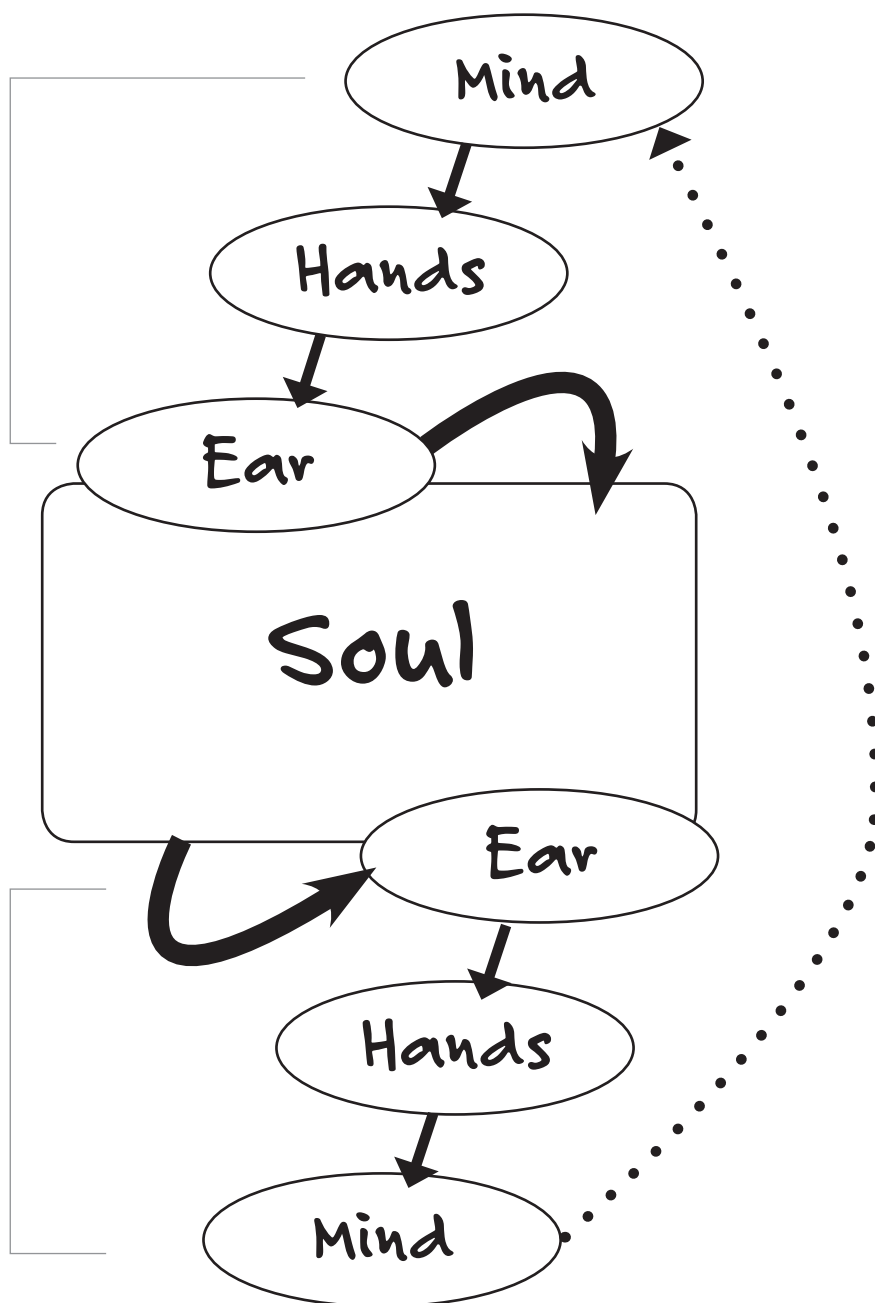


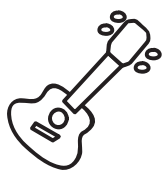
A Recipe for Success

Learning

Playing

"Playing By Ear"





Hey, Good Lookin'

by Hank Williams



C

Hey, hey, good lookin',

Whatcha got cookin'?

D7 G7 C G7

How's about cookin' somethin' up with me?

C

Hey, sweet baby,

Don't you think maybe

D7 G7 C C7

We could find us a brand new recipe?

F C

I got a hot-rod Ford and a two-dollar bill

F C

And I know a spot right over the hill.

F C

There's soda pop and the dancin's free,

D7 G7

So if you wanna have fun come along with me.

C

Hey, good lookin',

Whatcha got cookin'?

D7 G7 C G7

How's about cookin' somethin' up with me?

I'm free and ready,

So we can go steady.

How's about savin' all your time for me?

No more lookin',

I know I've been taken

How's about keepin' steady company?

I'm gonna throw my date-book over the fence

And find me one for five or ten cents.

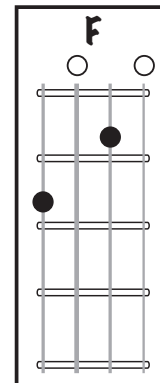
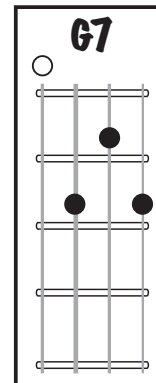
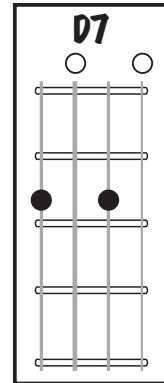
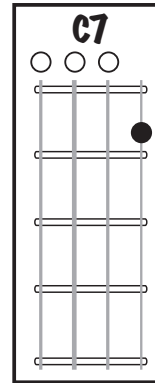
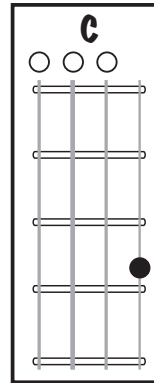
I'll keep it 'til it's covered with age

'Cause I'm writin' your name down on every page.

Hey, good lookin',

Whatcha got cookin'?

How's about cookin' somethin' up with me?



Hank Williams

(September 17, 1923 – January 1, 1953), born Hiram King Williams, was an American singer-songwriter and musician regarded as among the greatest country music stars of all time. He charted eleven number one songs between 1948 and 1953, though unable

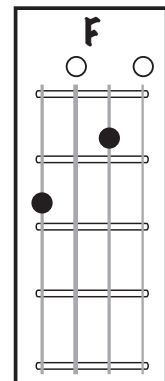
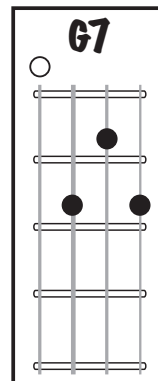
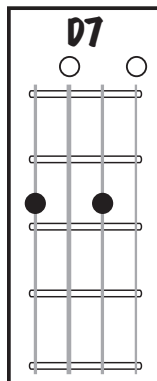
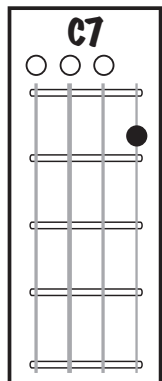
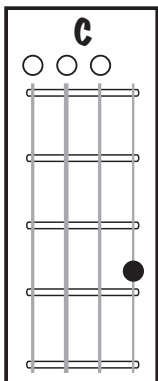
to read or write music to any significant degree.

His hits included "Your Cheatin' Heart", "Hey Good Lookin'" and "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry".

Hey Good Lookin'

- Hank Williams

Handwritten guitar chord chart for "Hey Good Lookin'" by Hank Williams. The chart consists of six systems of two staves each. The first staff of each system is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The second staff is a bass clef staff. Chords are written above the treble staff and below the bass staff. Some chords are circled and numbered (1, 2, 3) to indicate specific voicings or fingerings. The chords used are C, D7, G7, C7, and F.



Basic Ukulele "Uke" Chords - "C" Tuning (G C E A), High or Low G



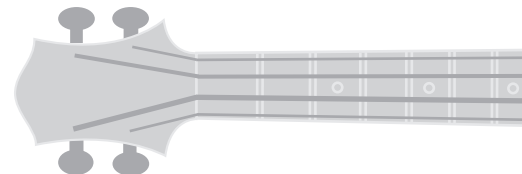
A core set of basic chords in open position that all Ukulele players should know.

C 3	Dm 2 3 1	Em 3 2 1	F 2 3 1	G 1 3 2	G7 2 1 3	Am 2	Bb 3 2 1 1
G 1 3 2	Am 2	Bm 3 1 1 1	C 3	D 2 3 4	D7 2 3	Em 2 1	F 2 1
D 2 3 4	Em 3 2 1	F#m 2 1 3	G 1 3 2	A 2 1	A7 1	Bm 3 1 1 1	C 3
A 2 1	Bm 3 1 1 1	C#m 1 2 4	D 2 3 4	E 2 3 4 1	E7 3 1 4 1	F#m 2 1 3	G 1 3 2
E 2 3 4 1	F#m 2 1 3	G#m 3 2 4 1	A 2 1	B 3 2 4 1 1	B7 1 2 1 1	C#m 1 2 4	D 2 3 4

Basic Chords

Open Position Chords in Common Keys

Chords with no open position voicings are shown in their movable form.



Seventh chords can show up in any key. Shown here in the common keys presented on this chart.

C7 1	C#7 1 1 1 2	D7 2 3	E7 1 2 3	F7 2 3 1 4
F#7 2 3 1 4	G7 2 1 3	G#7 1 3 2 4	A7 2	Bb7 1 2 1 1
B7 1 2 1 1	B7 3 2 1			

dim7 dim7

 3 4	 1 3 2 4
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A diminished seventh (dim7, °7) chord is usually played in place of a diminished chord

aug aug

 4 2 3	 4 2 3 1
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Any one of the notes of a dmin7 or augmented (aug, +) chord can be the root or letter name of the chord.

NOTE: All chord Fingerings are recommended but not mandatory.



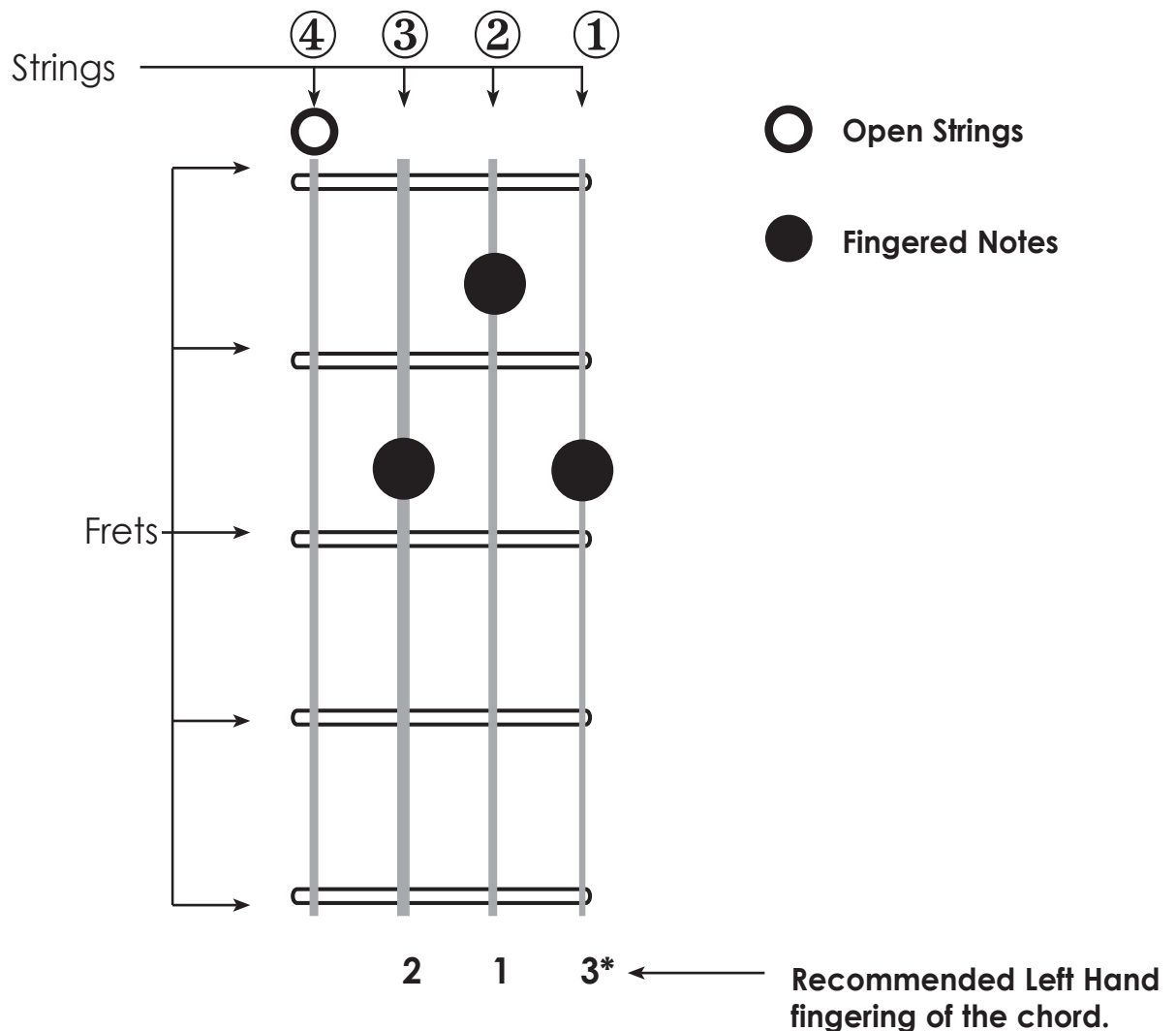


A core set of basic chords that all Ukulele players should know.

The Chord Diagram - Explained

G7

Chord Name
Root and Chord Type



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