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UkuleleLessons by Curt Sheller
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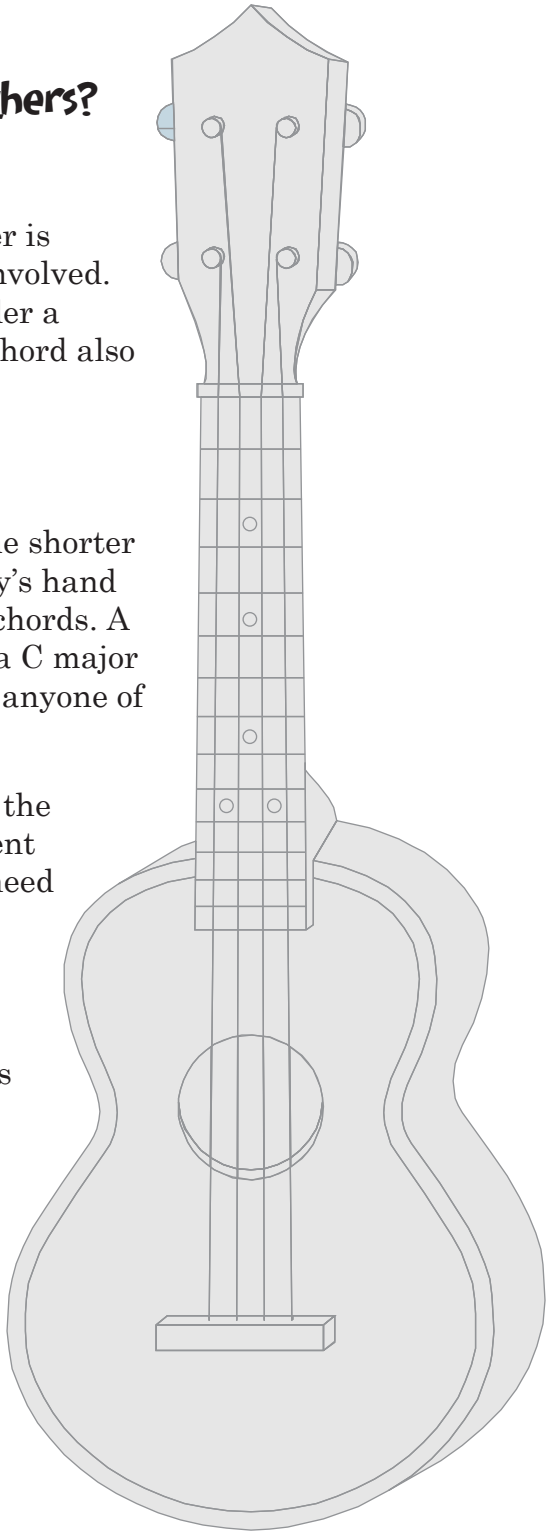
Basic* Ukulele Chords

Beginner to Advanced

The art and science of chord fingering. Why are some chords harder to finger than others?



Fingers, Strings, Frets

Why one chord would be harder to finger than another is dependent on the fingers, strings and frets that are involved. The more fingers, strings and frets involved, the harder a chord can be to finger. What fingers used to finger a chord also a play roll.

Fingers?

We have four fingers and there are all not equal. Some shorter then others and some stronger that others. Everybody's hand is a little different. This does play a role in fingering chords. A example shows up with the first chord we will cover, a C major chord. It is a one finger chord. That one finger can be anyone of your four fingers.

The combination of fingers used play a role. Whether the fingers are on adjacent strings or skip strings. Different frets or adjacent frets. The total ranges of frets that need to be covered. You finger dexterity, etc...

Chord Weight

Assigning a numbered weigh to each chord will allows you to compare chords.

If you add up the number of add up the fingers, strings and frets that are used for a particular chord can you arrive at a number that can be used to compare chords.

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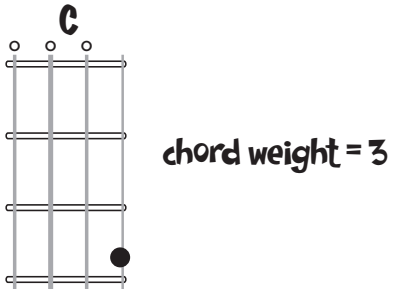
The C Major Chord

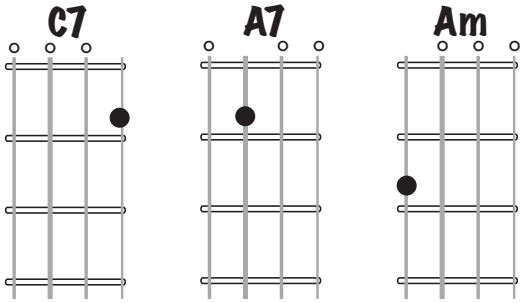
The C major chord can be played with one finger, any one of your four fingers. Which finger is used can be determined by what chord camp before the C and what chord is to follow. Typically finger three is used in preparation of switching to the other chords that are commonly used with C, such as Dm, Em F, G, G7 and Am to name a few.

The C Major Chord Weight

A C Major chord uses finger 3, string ①, fret (3). This is 1 plus 1 plus 1. This is a weight os three (3) for the C chord. The lower the weight of the chord, the easier it should be to play.



Here are a few other simple chords with a weight of 3.



Learning Chords

Most beginners learn chords based on the chords of a particular song. Simple two and three chord songs are the first songs most player use to learn the ukulele. With the ease of the C chord fingering. It is the most common first chord a player learns. In the songs that use a C chord, the F and G being the very common. The C chrod as well saw, using only one finger is pretty easy to play. The F not too bad and the G is the hardest of the three main chords that show up with C.

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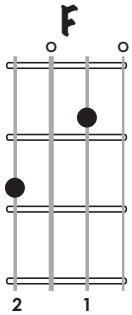
F Major

The F Major chord uses two fingers, spans three strings and two different frets. A 2 plus 3 plus 2 for a weight of 7.



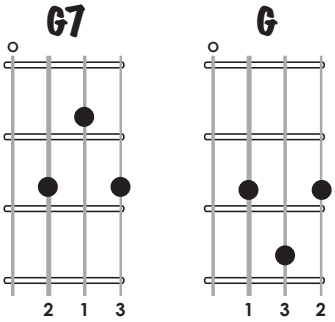
chord weight = 7

If you use your dominant fingers 2 and 1 it will be a little easier to play than using an alternate fingering with fingers 3 and 2 or fingers 4 and 1.

Note: The fingering shown for each chord is a recommended finger and not mandatory. Alternate fingerings can and should be used depending on the context of the chord before and after.

G Major and G7

An G Major chord is three fingers, spans three strings and two different frets, 3 plus 3 plus 2 for a weight of 8.



chord weight = 8

Fingering does Matter!

Although the G and G7 are the same chord weight, the G7 is a little easier to finger than the G.

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The G7 uses the finger combination 2 1 3 as shown, allows you to use your longer second finger the reach to the lower string three note. Your second finger, your longest finger can reach to a lower string's fret with out changing your hand position.

The G chord requires you to have finger 3 arch over a string one and still have it sound when playing the chord. This is what makes the G harder to finger than the G7.

Switching Chords

A chord fingerings are influenced and determined by its proceeding and following chords.

Alternate Fingerings - Many chords can have alternate fingerings. These are just additional fingerings beyond the recommend fingering of the chord show in this lesson.

Basic Chords

Basic hords can be organized fy common keys, ease of fingering or chord type, such as major, minor, seventh, etc. For this lesson I've includes one of my chord charts for ukulele. The cchord chart: **Basic Ukulele "Uke" Chords, "C" Tuning (g C E A) or Low G "C" Tuning for Soprano, Concert and Tenor Ukuleles**. This chart is organized by chords in common keys.

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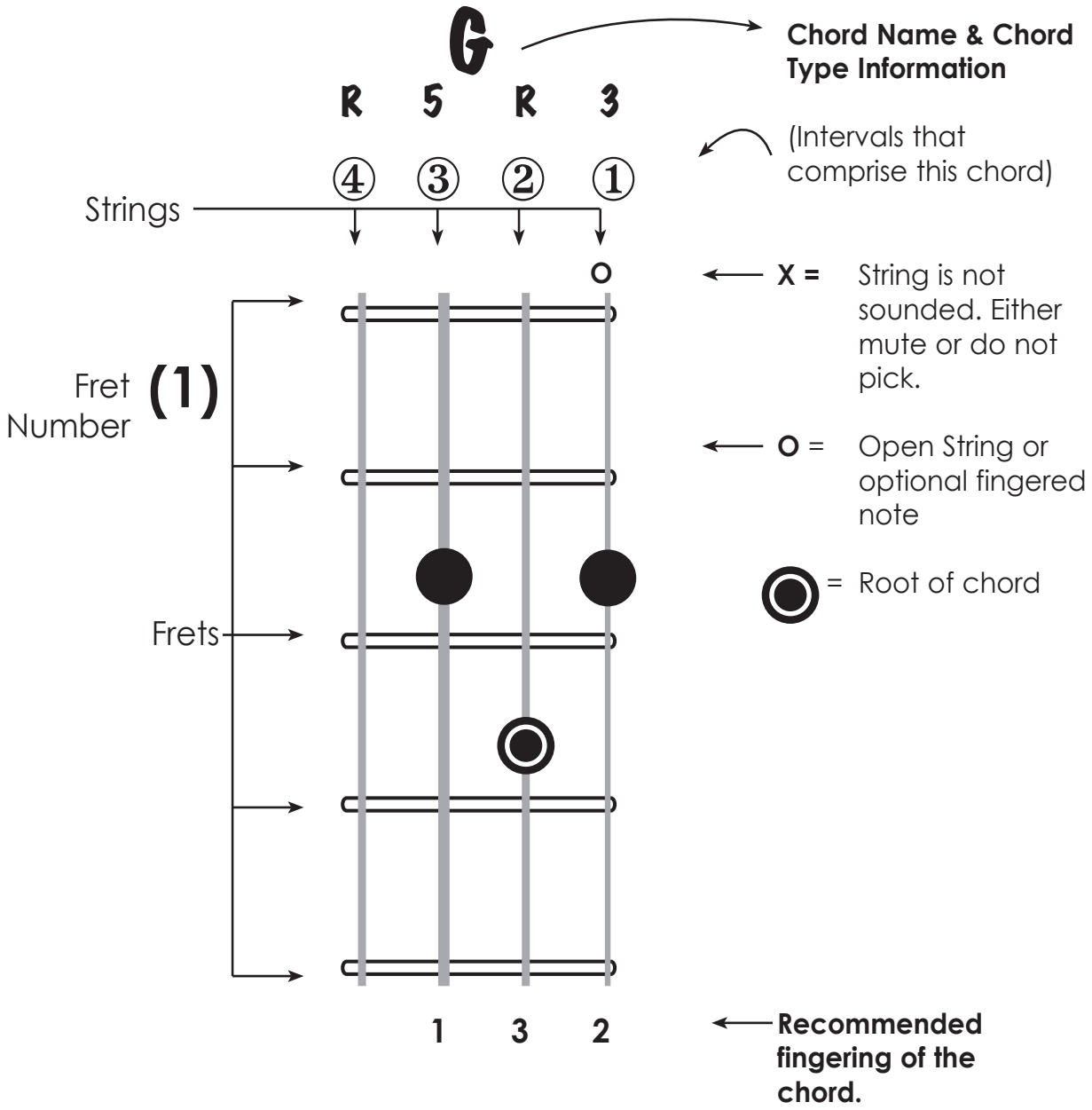
Basic Ukulele "Uke" Chords for Left Handed Players

"C" Tuning (G C E A) or Low G "C" Tuning for Soprano, Concert and Tenor Ukuleles

The Chord Diagram - Explained



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NOTE: All chord Fingerings are recommended but not mandatory.

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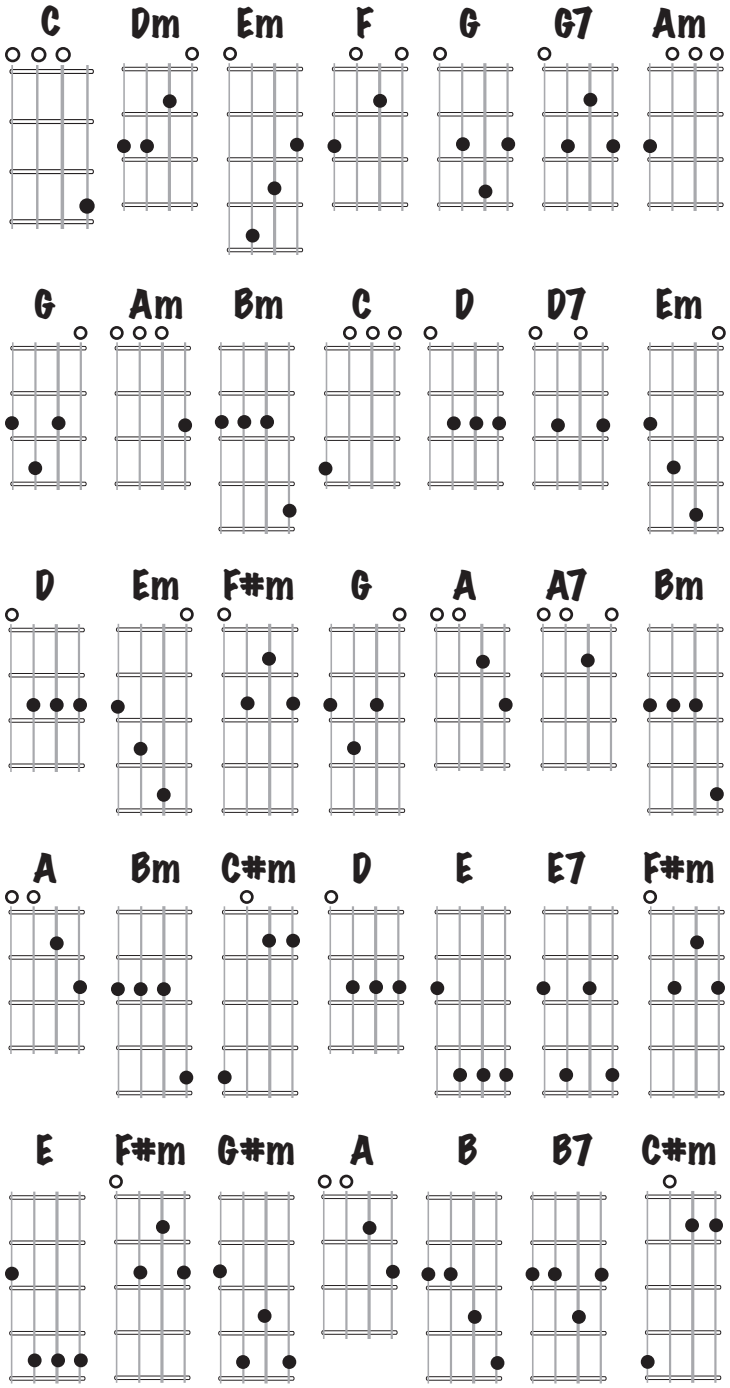
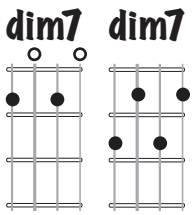
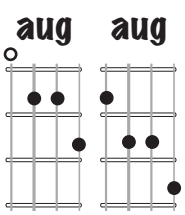
Basic Ukulele "Uke" Chords

"C" Tuning (g C E A) or Low G "C" Tuning for Soprano, Concert and Tenor Ukuleles





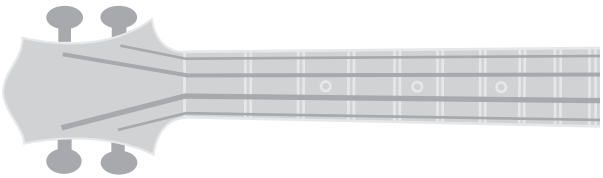
A diminished seventh (dim7, °7) chord can be played in place of a diminished chord



Any on of the notes of a dmin7 or augmented chord can be the root or letter name of the chord.

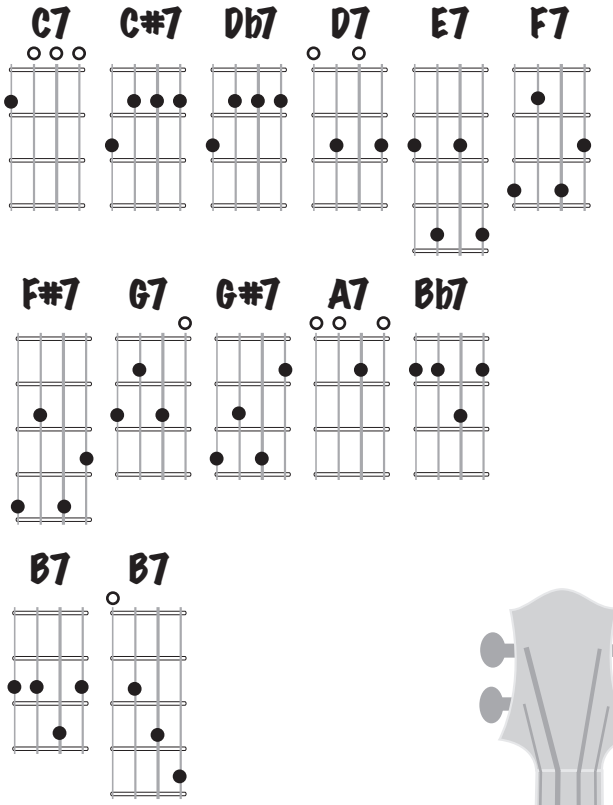
Basic Chords - GCEA,

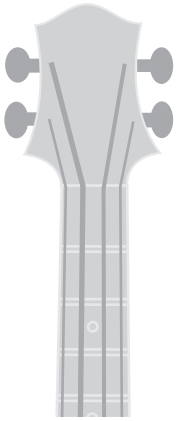
Open Position Chords and Common Keys



Seventh Chords

Seventh chords can show up in any of these common keys with any root (letter name of chord). Duplicates of previous chords are shown.
A few chords are not available as open position chords are shown in their movable form.





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