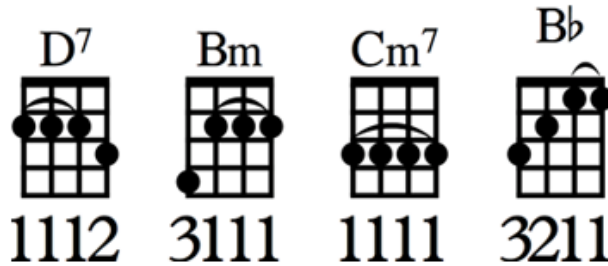




# BARRED CHORDS

To play a barred or bar chord, you are required to use a finger to fret or press down on multiple strings, usually the index finger but you can use your middle or ring finger too in certain situations. Common examples of barred chords include: D7, Bm, Cm7 and Bb, as shown in the following diagrams.



Barre chords can be quite a challenge especially when switching chord positions, but give these quick tips a try to conquer these chords which will provide loads of new possibilities in your ukulele playing.

## 1. Check your thumb position:



A barre chord requires a bit more strength since you are pressing down multiple strings against the fretboard. To get the most leverage, ensure that the ball of your thumb is pressed firmly into the neck of the ukulele. Use the ball of your thumb to press into the neck of the ukulele when playing a barre chord.

## 2. Get closer to the fret:



Aim to press down as close to right behind the fret as possible – almost as if you are pressing right down on the fret. Avoid barring way behind the fret. You're able to hold down the strings easier the closer your fingers are to the fret.

In the figure on the right, it might seem as if the strings wouldn't ring out clearly with my index finger that close on the fret, but I've positioned my finger so I maximize the leverage against the strings and get every string to ring out clearly.



### 3. Skip the half bar and use a full bar:

Some chords like Bb only require a half barre to play the chord, where you're only barring the bottom two strings rather than all four on a fret. It can be hard to get the pressure you need with a half barre, so consider using a full bar instead, which will have many advantages later on:



Half Bar example



Full bar example

### 4. Double up your bar:



This isn't always a feasible option, but in some cases, it can be helpful to lay your middle finger behind your index finger as you barre the strings. This makes your barre stronger and can allow the strings to ring out more clearly. This really only works for minor and minor 7th barre chords though (like Bm7, Cm7, C#m7) and is a great way to train your index finger on *bar etiquette*.

### 5. Isolate dead notes and adjust:

If you can't get a bar chord to ring out pleasantly and tunefully, hold down the chord and pluck each string individually to see which note or notes aren't ringing out. From there, experiment with adjusting the position of your barred finger on the strings. The key is to be aware of nuances, such as deadened notes or buzz notes, but experiment to see what works best for you.

### 6. Find an alternate position:



Typically, on the ukulele, you perform a barre with your index finger. However, you might find that using your middle finger works better in the context of certain chord progressions. For example, to play a D7 chord, I often like to use my middle finger to barre the 2nd fret and press down my ring finger on the 3rd fret of the bottom string, as shown in the following image.

### 5. Build strength with simple exercises:

If you're finding that you're still not able to get the hang of bar chords, be patient with yourself, because it takes a fair degree of strength in your fretting hand to hold down a bar chord. With time and practice, you find that playing barred chords much easier.

**Remember: The key in all of this is to practice and experiment.** It takes time and plenty of trial and error to play bar chords effectively and smoothly. Some of these barre chords are more difficult than others, but be patient with yourself and keep at it.