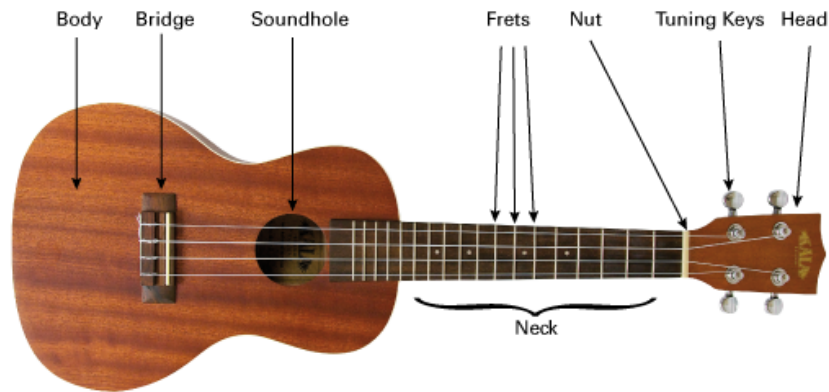


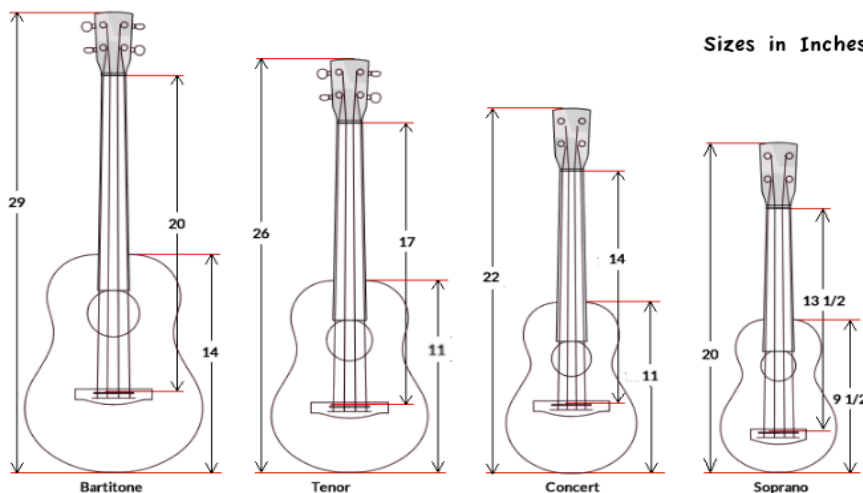


GETTING TO KNOW UKE

UKULELE BODY PARTS



UKULELE SIZE CHART



Sizes in Inches

Here are 4 standard sizes of ukulele. You may also come across other sizes such as, super-sopranos, sopraninos, pineapples and even mini piccolo size. Ukulele training at UCL is for Soprano & Concert sizes with a high G-string. Tenors can be used if tuned to the G C E A format. Baritone sized ukulele have completely different tuning altogether so will not be compatible with the UCL Level 1 training.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR UKULELE

Being so small, it can feel awkward trying to hold your ukulele whilst fretting & strumming at the same time. You may find it easier to use a neck strap especially when standing up. When sitting, tuck the body of the ukulele under your right arm (*don't smother though*) and slightly lift in the neck upwards so that you can stretch your fretting hand underneath comfortably. This takes a bit of practice. AVOID holding your left thumb over the top of the neck. This can lead to bad habits and will restrict you from progressing with the more advanced chord shapes. Please your thumb on the back of the neck directly behind the fretting finger positions. When fretting make sure your fingers are pointing back at you. Sloppy finger placement will cause fret buzz and dampened or dead notes, you want to avoid them at all costs.



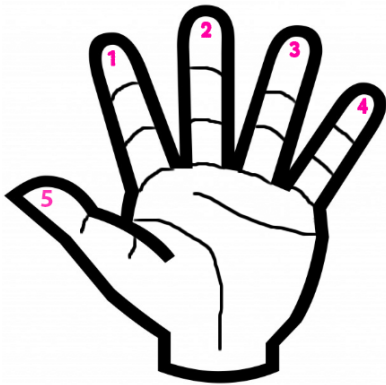
Check out ukulele masters [Jake Shimabukuro](#) and [Roy Smeck](#). They have the uke angled away from the body and their forearm resting very gently on the corner of the uke. The area of the uke they are touching is very small and mostly limited to the corners.

You can also use a ukulele strap for support, as Jake often does. Always try and alternate your playing by practicing whilst standing up as well as being seated.

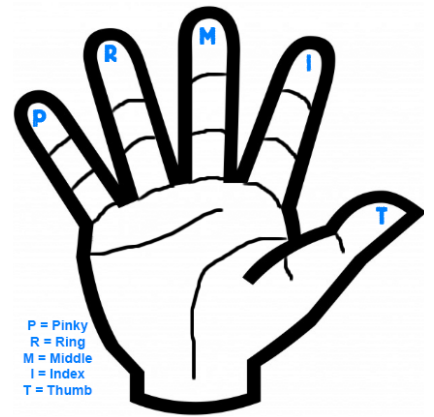




FRETTING



Your **LEFT HAND** (or *right hand if left-handed*) is known as your **FRETTING HAND**. The fingers on this hand are used to press down on the strings at various fret positions to produce various chords, melodies, riffs and even rhythmic sounds and are numbered 1-5. The **RIGHT HAND** is your **STRUMMING** hand (or *LEFT* is left handed). Each finger is labelled with a letter representing the finger name e.g P=Pinky. More on this in class.



STRUMMING

For right handed players, the right hand is your **STRUMMING HAND** and is used to strike the strings in all kinds of ways to get an acquired sound. Strumming patterns vary and can seem really complicated at the beginning but take them one step at a time. The position of where you strum the ukulele itself can have a big impact on the sound you produce from it. If you strum close to the bridge (*where the strings are tied on*), then you'll get a very bassy, clacky sound where as if you strum directly over the soundhole it can be a bit boomy. Each ukulele has its own sweet strumming spot, which can usually be found where the body meets the neck around the 12th fret position.

PICKING AND PLUCKING



During lessons, you will explore various methods for both picking and strumming. As well as strumming, your strumming hand is also used for picking out individual strings when playing melodies, solos or riffs. There is a lot to take in but in time, you will be able to alternate and integrate each style of playing in a way that adds musicality and defined dynamics.

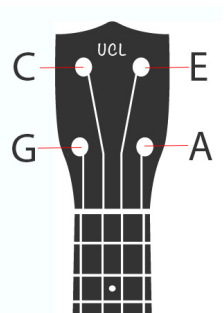
TUNING



G - C - E - A (Good - Children - Eat - Apples)

It is vitally important to get into the habit of tuning up each time you pick up the ukulele. Differences in temperatures can affect the tuning as the wood contracts and expands in heat and cold temperatures, so it is important to tune up regularly.

Clip on digital tuners are highly recommended and you can order one directly from UCL HQ and via the website for just £6 if you don't already own one. You can also download various free apps such **KALA UKULELE** to your phone. Clip on tuners pick up the vibration from the wood of your ukulele so can be more accurate than tuning by ear with the apps.



TIME KEEPING

Another good app that is essential to download is **PRO METRONOME** which will help you keep time. It will feel very alien at first, and some may even think that the click tracks are out of time but I can assure you they're not. Our perception of time can become slightly distorted when playing music as you can speed up without noticing so the key to good musicianship is perfect timing, especially when you are playing with others.