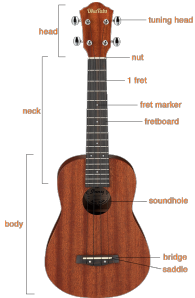




# UCL TOP TIPS

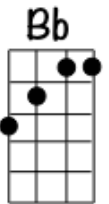
## FOR NEW UKULELE PLAYERS



**As the saying goes, learn to walk before you start running. It's the same with any type of practical training, whether with an instrument, ball, car, bike etc. etc. It's all about repetition and fine tuning as your training gets underway.**

Before you begin, you should familiarise yourself with your ukulele as you will be spending a lot of time with it. Get to know the parts, the string names, how to hold it effectively, how to tune it properly and understand key finger positions and why it is important to stick to them throughout training. **(See GETTING TO KNOW UKE)**

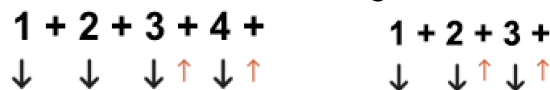
**CHORD SHAPES:** Practising chord shapes is an essential part of training and helps to build the essential muscle memory. Switching between chord shapes can be tricky but the more practice time you put in, and the slower you train (at first) the easier your brain will respond to the repetitive action and store the information. Once you are comfortable moving about from shape to shape you can start to increase the speed gradually. There will be lots of class exercises on this subject.



**FINGER POSITIONING:** You will get to know each of your fingers individually. You may also learn that even though you thought you had complete control over your fingers, this is not the case. You will often find yourself looking at them expecting them to do what you are trying to tell them to do subconsciously, but your fingers have a mind of their own and can be a little mischievous. You will find out about that soon enough. During class, you will become acquainted with each individual finger of both the left and right hand and learn their new names. They all have very different jobs to do so please treat them well, stretch them before and after each class or home practice session. *More on this in class.*

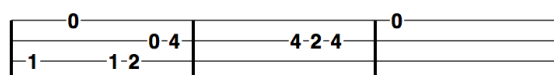
### STRUMMING

Strumming comes in many shapes and forms and can also be a little confusing and frustrating at first. So now you got to think about your arms, wrists and hands too. You are teaching them to move in ways that they have never moved before so try to stay relaxed and loosened up when attempting each of the basic strumming patterns. There will be graphic diagrams for each strumming pattern on associated work sheet and song sheet PDFs such as the ones below:



### TAB

Tab is another form of reading music instruction and is presented with numbers (representing the frets) and 4 vertical lines (representing the strings) and bar lines (to separate each bar). You will develop a basic understanding of how to read tab at Level 1 with some simple examples to try out but it's at level 2.1 where you begin to put this element into music training into practice. More on this in class.





## HOME PRACTICE

As with any new training, you need to put in the extra practice time at home. Keep your ukulele by the couch when watching TV & when adverts come on, press mute, pick up your uke and practice just one of your weekly exercises. If other people are with you and you don't want to be rude you can practice your movement of chord shapes without strumming. Find quiet spaces to practice even if for just 10 minutes at a time. Micro practicing more often can be more effective than one giant practice for the week then nothing else.

## GO SLOW



Always practice the class exercises at home at a slow pace of around 60BPM to start with. You want to make sure that every string or chord you play, rings out tunefully. If you hear buzz noises or dampened, then spend a bit of time adjusting your finger positions to make sure all notes you strike ring out clearly and coherently before moving on. Some chord shapes need more work than others. Some use just one finger and some use all four fingers. More in this in class.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT

Don't forget to take regular breaks when practicing, especially if you start to feel any pain in your hands, arms or fingers. There will be some aches and pain from building these muscles in a new way, but if you do feel any sharp and excessive pain please seek medical attention.

## PATIENTS

Not everyone will progress at playing ukulele at the same speed so please don't think for one minute you can't do it. YOU CAN. It takes time to develop new skills in any area of physical development. You may not notice any major improvements straight away, but believe me, after 10 weeks with UCL, you will. If there are any exercises you are particularly struggling with, don't be afraid to ask for advice either in class, in the FB group or to other members of UCL. Everyone is always willing to help their comrades!

## HAVE FUN

Frustration can sometimes/often get in the way of the fun side of things during your initial training, but it's up to you to negotiate with your frustration and tell it that the FUN stuff is on its way and keep at it.

As you may be aware, the UCL adventures just keep on getting bigger and better each year. We have performed at for hundreds of charitable causes, busked all over Merseyside, played at the Rock N Roll Marathon, Light Night, Pride Festival, Summer Strum Festival, in collaboration with other local community music groups, in honour of World Ukulele Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb), Beatles Week, Make Music Day and much, much more. Are you ready to get started?



**GOOD LUCK 😊**