

# Ukulele — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into daily reps with your ukulele in hand. Each section maps to a course module and gives you exercises, fill-in worksheets, and checklists to run on real chords and real songs. Keep your ukulele and a clip-on tuner beside you and a metronome app open, and treat every worksheet as a decision you make on the instrument, not just notes on a page.

## Getting Started with Your Ukulele

Set up the right instrument, learn its parts and hold, and get reliably in tune at the start of every session.

### Exercise: Tune From Scratch and Verify by Ear

Detune all four strings slightly flat, then retune to standard G C E A using a clip-on tuner, always tuning up to each note. When the tuner says you are in tune, check by ear: play the C string at the 4th fret and compare it to the open E string, then the E string at the 5th fret against the open A string. Note any pair that does not match and retune.

- Which string took the longest to settle, and was it a new string still stretching?

- Did your by-ear checks (C 4th fret vs open E, E 5th fret vs open A) match the tuner?

- How far out of tune had the ukulele drifted since your last session?

- What is your reminder system to tune at the very start of every practice?

### Worksheet: My Ukulele Setup Profile

Record the details of your instrument and starting setup so you can track string changes and spot tuning problems over time.

Ukulele size (soprano / concert / tenor)

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Brand and model

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String type and brand (e.g. Aquila Nylgut, Worth fluorocarbon)

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Date strings last changed

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High-G or low-G tuning

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Tuner used (clip-on model / app)

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Holding position that feels most relaxed (seated / standing / strap)

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## Checklist: Posture and Hand Position Check

- [ ] Ukulele held to the body by the strumming forearm, not gripped by the fretting hand
- [ ] Neck angled slightly upward, face of the instrument nearly vertical
- [ ] Fretting thumb flat on the back of the neck, not wrapped over the top
- [ ] Fingers pressing just behind the frets on the fingertips, nails short
- [ ] Strumming over the spot where the neck meets the body, not over the soundhole
- [ ] Shoulders and wrists relaxed; no aching after five minutes of playing

## Your First Chords and Songs

Learn to read chord charts, play the core open chords cleanly, and make changes smooth enough for real songs.

### Exercise: One-Minute Changes Drill

Pick your weakest chord pair (often C to F or Am to G). Set a one-minute timer and count how many times you can switch cleanly back and forth, strumming once per chord. A change only counts if every note rings clear. Record the number, rest, then try to beat it. Log this daily for one week.

- Which chord pair did you drill, and what was your day-one score?

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- What was your score after seven days?

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- Did you find a guide or anchor finger that shortened the move?

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- Which note tended to buzz or thud, and what fingertip adjustment fixed it?

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### Worksheet: Chord Shape Reference Sheet

For each chord you have learned, write down the finger placements from its diagram in your own words so you can self-check without looking at the course. Use the format finger-string-fret.

Chord name (e.g. C, Am, F, G, G7)

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Finger 1 (index) placement

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Finger 2 (middle) placement

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Finger 3 (ring) placement

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Finger 4 (pinky) placement, if any

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Open strings

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Trouble note to watch for buzzing

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### Exercise: Play Your First Two-Chord Song

Choose a two-chord song such as Iko Iko (C and G7) or Row, Row, Row Your Boat (C with one G7). Play it all the way through at half speed using only steady downstrokes, never stopping the strum to set up a chord. Then play it with the original recording slowed to about 75 percent.

- Which song did you choose and what two chords does it use?

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- Were you able to change chords without stopping the strum? Where did you stumble?

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- What tempo (bpm or percent of original) let you play it gap-free?
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- What single change still needs the most work?
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### Checklist: Clean Chord Standard

- Every string in the chord rings clearly when plucked one at a time
- No fingertip is leaning against and muting a neighboring string
- Fingers move as one shape into the chord, not one at a time
- Fingers stay close to the strings between changes instead of flying away
- Can play the chord and change without looking, in short bursts
- Change happens in time with a slow metronome click

## Strumming and Rhythm

Lock in a steady pulse and the counted strumming patterns that turn chords into recognizable grooves.

### Exercise: Build the Island Strum

Set a metronome to 70 bpm. On a single C chord, keep your strumming hand moving down-up like a pendulum the whole time and play the island pattern: down on 1, down on 2, up after 2, up after 3, down on 4, up on the final and (you miss the strings on beat 3 and the first and). Loop it for two minutes, then add a C to Am change without stopping.

- At what tempo can you keep the island strum perfectly even on one chord?
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- Did your hand keep moving (pendulum) even on the missed strums?
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- When you added the chord change, could you keep the pattern looping?
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- Where did the pattern break down, and was it the rhythm or the chord change?
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### Worksheet: Strumming Pattern Tracker

For each pattern you practice, write it out as downs and ups over the count, then log the fastest tempo at which you can play it cleanly on a single chord and with changes.

Pattern name (all downs / down-up / island / pop ballad)

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Written pattern over 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

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Max clean tempo on one chord (bpm)

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Max clean tempo with chord changes (bpm)

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Song this pattern fits

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Notes (where it breaks down)

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### Exercise: Add the Chunk and Play Along

On the island strum, add a percussive chunk on beats 2 and 4 by letting the side of your strumming hand mute the strings as you strum down. Once it feels natural, play a song you know along with the original recording slowed to 75 percent, then bring it up to full speed.

- Did the chunk land exactly with the strum, or was the timing slightly off?

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- Which song did you play along to, and at what speed did you start?
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- What full-tempo percentage could you reach while staying in time?
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- Did playing with the recording expose any timing drift you could not hear alone?
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### Checklist: Rhythm Foundations

- Can count one and two and three and four and out loud while strumming
- Strumming hand keeps a continuous down-up pendulum motion
- Practiced every new pattern on one chord before adding changes
- Tap the foot on the four main beats to anchor the pulse
- Strum muted strings rather than stopping when a chord is not ready
- Can vary dynamics, softer in verses and louder in choruses

## Fingerpicking and Building Your Practice

Move into melodic fingerpicking, widen your chord vocabulary, and lock in a routine that keeps you improving.

### Exercise: Thumb-Index-Middle Picking

Hold a C chord. Assign thumb to the G and C strings, index to the E string, middle to the A string. Pluck in order G, C, E, A slowly and evenly with a metronome at 60 bpm, keeping every note the same volume. Then keep the exact same picking pattern while changing between C, Am, and F.

- Was each plucked note even in volume, or did one finger dig in harder?

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- At what tempo could you keep the pattern steady on a single chord?
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- When you added chord changes, did the picking flow continue unbroken?
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- Which string or finger felt least under control?
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### Worksheet: Travis Picking Build-Up Log

Travis picking is learned in layers. Log your progress adding one element at a time, noting the tempo at which each layer is solid before moving on.

Layer 1: thumb alternating G and C — steady tempo (bpm)

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Layer 2: added index on E string — steady tempo (bpm)

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Layer 3: added middle on A string — steady tempo (bpm)

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Chord(s) used for practice

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Did the thumb stay dead steady? (yes / drifting)

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Next layer or refinement to work on

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### Exercise: Design and Run Your 20-Minute Routine

Write out your own 20-minute daily routine using the course template: tune and warm up, transition drills, pattern practice, a song slightly beyond your level, then free play. Run it for five days straight and log it in the practice tracker template.

- What is your weakest chord pair this week (the focus of your transition drills)?

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- Which pattern are you developing, and at what target tempo?

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- Which stretch song did you choose, and why is it just beyond you?

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- After five days, what measurably improved (change score, tempo, or song)?

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### Checklist: Practice Habits That Stick

- Practice happens in short focused chunks, not aimless noodling
- A little practice happens most days rather than one long weekly session
- One-minute change scores and pattern tempos are logged regularly
- Each session ends on a song you enjoy, so you finish on a high
- A clear next-skill goal is set (barre chords, melodies, low-G, or playing with others)
- New patterns are always practiced on one chord before adding changes

### Your Action Plan

1. Week 1: Tune to GCEA at the start of every session and learn the parts and a relaxed hold; play C, Am, and F until each string rings clean.
2. Week 1: Run the one-minute changes drill on your weakest pair daily and log the score.
3. Week 2: Add G and G7 and play two complete two-chord songs gap-free at half speed.
4. Week 2: Master steady downstrokes and the down-up pattern at 70 bpm on a single chord with a metronome.
5. Week 3: Learn the island strum on one chord, then layer in your earlier chord changes without stopping.
6. Week 4: Add the chunk on beats 2 and 4 and play along with a recording slowed to 75 percent, working up to full tempo.
7. Week 5: Learn the thumb-index-middle picking pattern and keep it going through C, Am, and F changes.
8. Week 6: Add Dm, C7, and A7, and build Travis picking one layer at a time.
9. Ongoing: Run a 20-minute daily routine and log change scores and pattern tempos in the practice tracker.
10. Next horizon: Tackle barre chords (B-flat), pick out a melody, try a low-G set, and play with other people or a group.









