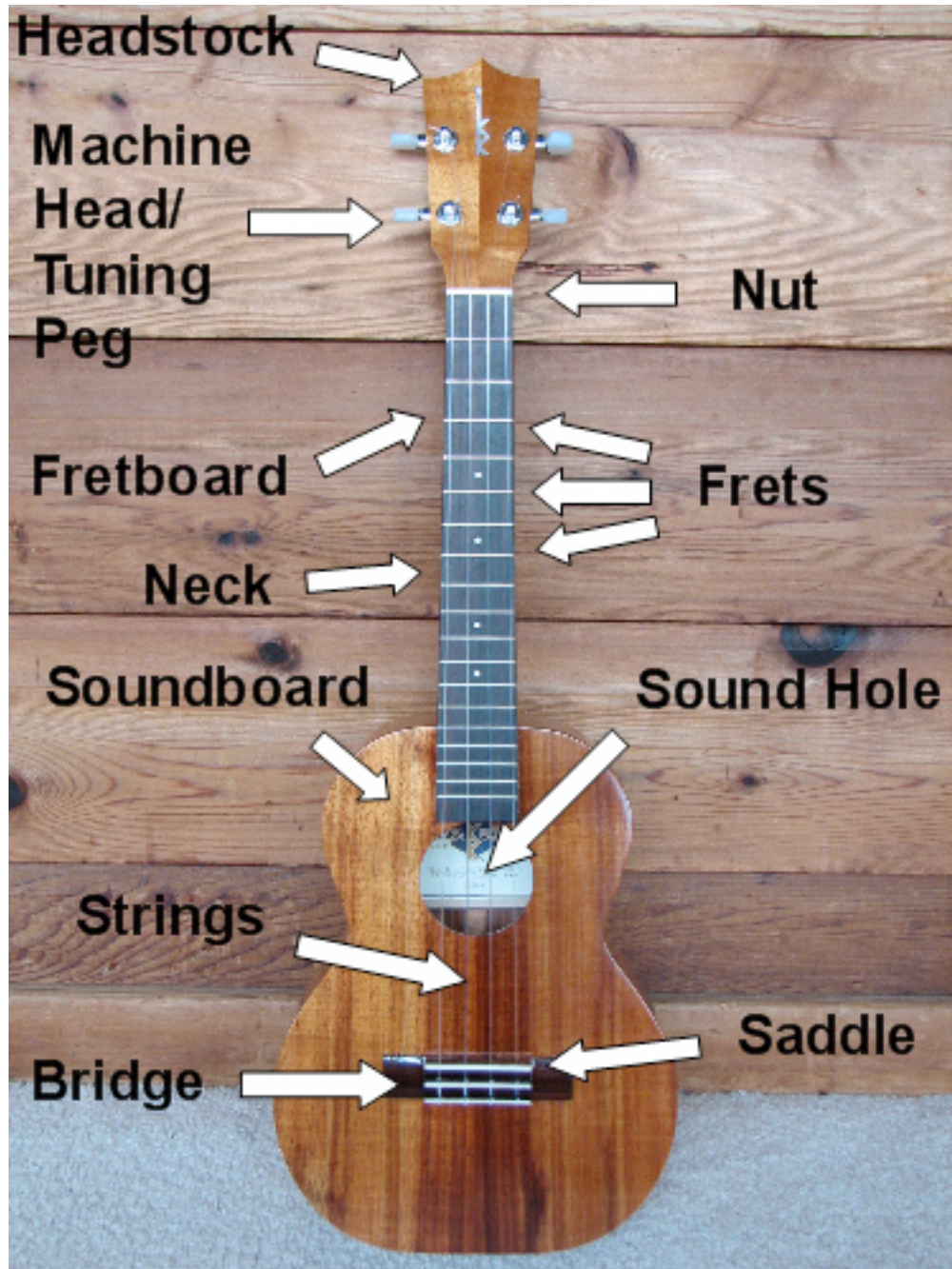


“Uke Can Change The World” Jim Beloff

# WELCOME TO “UKULELE FOR BEGINNERS” Taught By Cali Rose

## ANATOMY OF THE UKULELE



## THE UKULELE IS AMAZING !!!

- ☺ We can pick out a **MELODY** line
- ☺ We can form chords and make **HARMONY**
- ☺ We can strum and create **RHYTHM**
- ☺ It's **PORTABLE AND ADORABLE**

Above all, the ukulele is a very social instrument. No matter our level of skill and experience, we can play music together and have a wonderful time. The ukulele is a *joy-maker!*

## UKULELES COME IN SIZES!

The **soprano**, often called "standard" in Hawaii, is the smallest and the original size ukulele. The **concert** size was developed in the 1920's as an enhanced soprano, slightly larger and louder with a deeper tone. Shortly thereafter, the **tenor** was created, having more volume and deeper bass tone.

## HOLDING THE UKULELE

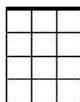
Hold the ukulele like you would hold a little baby, close to your heart (literally), as you strum with your right hand (which falls naturally on top of the upper frets and not the sound hole) and form chords with your left. Support the ukulele with your right forearm and left hand, holding it comfortably, but not too tight. If you are holding the uke properly, you should be able to take either hand away and the uke will stay in place. Some suggest you hold your ukulele at or near a 45 degree angle, but it is important to find what works for you, your body and your ukulele.



## UKULELE FRETBOARD

The neck of the ukulele is magic! This is where we make chords and build melodies. The big three magic-makers are frets, fingers and strings. We refer to the neck as "the fretboard." You see several parallel *slats* up and down the fretboard. These are fret wires and change the pitch of a string. The space *between* the fret wires is where we place our fingers when we form chords and we refer to this *space* as a fret.

A chord diagram you see on sheet music is nothing more than the first four frets on the ukulele. No mystery there...

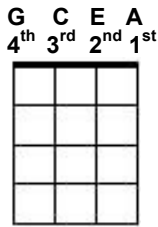


**sheet music**



**ukulele fretboard**

The ukulele has four strings. When you sing or hum “**my dog has fleas**” you “hear” the standard ukulele tuning. But what are the correct pitches of the strings?



This diagram shows what the **standard ukulele tuning** looks like on the fretboard.

**G-C-E-A** is the standard tuning for the **soprano, concert** and **tenor** ukuleles. It is tuned to the “C” scale.

4 <sup>th</sup> String is “G” (closest to our face)	<b>MY</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> String is “C”	<b>DOG</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> String is “E”	<b>HAS</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> String is “A”	<b>FLEAS</b>

Here is a nifty way to remember the string names:

**GOOD CHILDREN EAT APPLES or GET CRAZY EVERY AFTERNOON**

## TUNING THE UKULELE

Like all stringed instruments, ukuleles need to be in tune. I always tune before a show because weather, movement, playing can throw a uke out of tune. If your uke has new strings, it takes several days for them to stretch out, which calls for extra tuning. If a tuning peg is loose, the string will not hold its tune. Some tuning pegs have tiny screws in the pegs that can be tightened—gently—and problem solved.



I recommend you obtain a digital tuner (like the one pictured here) that clips onto the headstock of your ukulele. Tuners that are calibrated for ukulele tuning are more user-friendly. As you pluck a string, the digital readout indicates when it is in tune, so you tune your strings *visually*, rather than by ear. This is especially helpful in noisy places or if you are just learning to play by ear. These tuners cost as little as \$20 and run on replaceable lithium batteries. You can purchase one at your local music store and online.

**Remember to turn your tuner OFF when not in use so the battery doesn’t run down.**

There are also online websites that ring the tone of each string so you can listen and tune your uke to the sound on your computer. *Google* “ukulele tuning.”

**FYI:** The “tones” of the ukulele strings are part of the chromatic scale. Here is that scale so you can “see” how the ukulele tuning fits into the big picture:

**C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C**



For example, if you are tuning your “A” string and it registers a G# instead on your digital tuner, you can look at this scale and see the G# is lower than the A, so you need to raise the pitch of the string just a little by turning the tuning peg to tighten the string. Tightening the string brings the pitch of the tone higher. Loosening the string brings it lower.

## MORE HELPFUL HINTS

### ABOUT HUMMING ALONG

I find it helpful to *hum* the tone as I tune. Why? Your body is a resonating instrument too and amplifies the sound of the ukulele. Your body is learning to play this instrument, along with the brain and heart. For me, humming along is a mysterious and useful way to help all the parts of us learn to play this instrument.

### HIGH “G” TUNING AND LOW “G” TUNING

Most soprano ukuleles use the “re-entrant” tuning where the “G” string is *higher* than the next string, “C,” thus giving it that familiar Hawaiian ukulele sound. However some concert and tenor players prefer to play with a “low G tuning” where the “G” is *lower* than the next string “C.”

If the fretboard on your ukulele is made of wood (not plastic), you can change up the tuning, from high “G” to low “G” and back again. You must use a thicker “wound” string for the low “G” tuning because its heavier gauge contributes to the *bass* sound.

### TO “STRAP” OR NOT TO “STRAP”

Many find it easier to play the ukulele when it is supported by a neck or shoulder strap. There are “flea collar” straps that go around your neck and hook into the sound hole and small guitar straps that attach to strap knobs which are professionally installed on your ukulele.

### ABOUT FINGERNAILS AND UKULELE STRINGS

Musicians everywhere know that fingernails can both help and hinder us when we play stringed instruments. I keep the fingernails on my left hand short. If they get too long, it becomes difficult to form chords and uncomfortable too, which is no fun. But I keep the fingernails on my right hand a little longer because this makes the strums sound more snappy and crisp.

Depending on how much you play your ukulele, your strings should last a few months. You can purchase a new set at your local music store and ask the salesperson to show you how to replace the strings. A set of four ukulele strings costs around \$10. Make sure you buy the right strings for your size ukulele. Remember it takes a few days for new strings to stretch out and keep their tune.

**So now we are ready to play music together! In Hawaiian this means “Kanikapila” and that is what the ukulele is all about. It’s fun to play alone and even more fun to play with other people. Welcome to the ukulele family and happy strumming.**