

Basic advice

Learning to play the ukulele is about having fun and doing it in a way which suits you. Take what you want and need from this article, you will develop your own technique as you progress.

1. Do it in a way which is comfortable for you and at your own pace.
2. If you are left handed you have two options, learn to play right handed or get a ukulele set up for a left handed person and reverse everything below.
3. Hold the ukulele with your left hand on the neck so you can make the chords and your right hand is able to strum. Usually the advice is to tuck the bottom part of the ukulele under your right elbow and hold it with this. Some people find having the ukulele on a strap easier. There are different straps available; on line, at a music shop or by making your own, the simplest is a bit of string!
4. Before you play you need to make sure the ukulele is in tune. You can tune it in a variety of ways; by ear and using a musical instrument or using pitch pipes. The simplest and most popular way is to use an electronic tuner which clips to the headstock. It needs to be set to a ukulele, the tuners instructions should help in this. This indicates when a string is in tune, flat or sharp and you turn the tuning pegs until it is in tune.
5. Strumming is usually done using your index finger or middle finger either supported by your thumb or just on its own. The down stroke is with the nail and up stroke with the pad of the finger. Some people use a plectrum, usually felt or leather for ukuleles.

6. Strumming is usually at the base of the neck where it meets the ukulele body. The one certain thing is that it should not be over the sound hole. Over time you will find the best place to strum.

7. To make a chord the fingers of your left hand hold down the string between the frets.

That's the basics, now having a go is the best and probably only way of learning.

We advise trying simple songs such as Clementine or He's got the whole world in his hands. Both are on the song pages

Have fun