

Choosing a Ukulele and Tuning a Ukulele

Ukuleles come in 4 different sizes:

- Soprano
- Concert
- Tenor
- Baritone

I recommend the **soprano** for children.

The Makala MK-S (soprano) made by Kala Ukuleles is sturdy and tunes well. I don't officially endorse this company. This ukulele has simply stood the test of time and tunes up well despite my little students dropping them and banging them up.

The **concert** ukulele is a little bigger than the soprano and will work as well, but the cost will be higher.

The **tenor** is the most common size used by adults and professional players.

The **baritone** is tuned differently and the information in this course will not apply to the baritone ukulele.

Additional Equipment:

A strap will make it much easier for the child to hold the ukulele. See "How to Hold the Ukulele" for more information on straps.

Guitar Picks. My little students tell me their favorite way to strum the ukulele is with a guitar pick. They have been successful, so I go with it! So be sure to get a pack of MEDIUM guitar picks.

A ½ inch binder and sheet protectors. Place music in sheet protectors & a binder. Place the binder on the music stand. This makes it easy to get to the music when it's time for lesson and practice.

An inexpensive **Music Stand.** The Stage Line Brand Tubular Base folding music stand is inexpensive and has held up the best with my students.



A **flat sitting stool** will make it easier to sit up straight, and protect the lower back. Make sure your child's feet can touch the floor. For my own students, I purchased inexpensive wooden stools (see picture) and cut the legs down so that the kids' feet could touch the floor. About 12" to 15" works well for children the age of 5-9.



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How To Hold The Ukulele

It's easiest to hold the ukulele with a strap.

- There are straps that go around the neck or come behind the ukulele with a hook for the sound hole (Picture 1).
- Small sized guitar straps (for ukuleles or children's guitars) work well. Have the music store insert a strap button at the end of the ukulele. The other side of the strap can be tied at the head of the ukulele (Pictures 2-4)

Hold the ukulele with the head pointing at 2:00 o'clock and the body pointing at 8:00 o'clock. (picture 5)



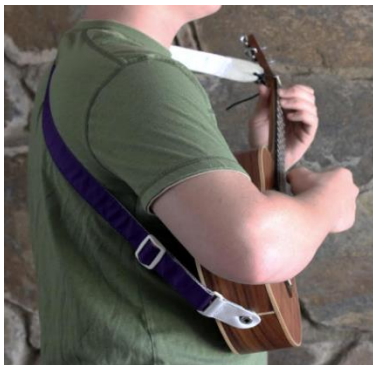
Picture One



Picture Two



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5

Tuning the Ukulele

For Kids:

- Listen to the sound of the note of each string after your parent or teacher tunes the ukulele.
 - Sing the tuning song: My Dog Has Fleas
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For Parents and Teachers: In the beginning, and probably for some time, you will need to tune the ukulele. Here are the steps to learning how to tune:

1. Each string of the ukulele must be tuned to a certain NOTE. A note is a sound.
2. The white pegs on the head of the ukulele are the TUNING PEGS. Check to see which peg matches each string.
3. Pluck and turn (just a little) each peg to see which direction causes the note to sound higher or lower. The highness or lowness of the note is called the **pitch**.
4. Now it's time to use a clip-on tuner. Get one that has a "chromatic" setting. The tuner clips on to the head of the ukulele and picks up the vibration of the note. Here is a picture of one style:



5. Put the tuner on the "chromatic" setting. If a 3-digit number comes up, it should say **440**. If you get any other number, find the button that controls the numbers and push it until you get **440**.

6. You should **NOT** see a musical “flat symbol”: **b**
If you see that symbol on the screen, find the button that controls that symbol, and push it until the symbol disappears.

7. The notes of the ukulele string tuning are (from string 4 to 1):
Good - **string 4** – closest to the ceiling when holding the ukulele
Cooks - **string 3**
Eat - **string 2**
A lot - **string 1** – closest to the floor when holding the ukulele

8. When you strike a string, a note will show up on the tuner as well as an indicator needle. Some tuners change color.

9. Adjust the tuning peg until you get the note. The needle indicator will be pointing straight up at the note name, and often there is a color change. Look at the diagram* to adjust the string down or up.

10. It is possible to tune a string to the wrong note. Be sure the notes from top to bottom are: G, C, E, and A

***Note Diagram:** There are 12 notes in the western musical scale. Notice there is NOT an E# or B#.

