

# Easy fancy chords (among other things) for beginners and non-beginners

Grande Royale Ukulelists of the Black Swamp — [grubsmusic.com](http://grubsmusic.com)

This document (**latest version May 4, 2020**) will be updated with information related to WCDPL's weekly virtual Ukulele Club live streams. We hope there's *something* enlightening and fun here for almost everyone, whether or not you've already been playing the ukulele for a while.

Will Grove-White (of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain) has a brief set of online lessons for absolute beginners: <https://willgrovewhite.com/learning-to-play-the-ukulele-lesson-one/>

James Hill has some free lessons for "beyond-beginner" players on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrirF96jaX3hWmwUqeu2yDMfY-ORPMJFj>

Either way, the main thing is to get the instrument tuned up properly; after that, almost *anything* you play on a ukulele will sound pretty good!

That being said, the first three "basic" chords that beginners are encouraged to learn are usually **C**, **F**, and **G** (or maybe **G7**). But each one requires a different number of fingers and a different hand position, which means you need to study and practice a bit before you can confidently play a simple song using those so-called "basic" chords! On the other hand, because of the unusual way the ukulele is tuned, it's sometimes easier to begin by playing "fancy" chords than "basic" ones.

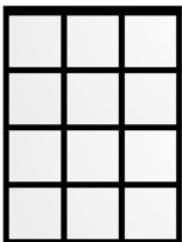
Studying and practicing are important and necessary, but we think the most important foundations of musicianship come from *making real music*, especially together with other people. So we're going to show you some easy and good-sounding ways do that — and because most of the chords we're going to show you are "fancy", they're useful for non-beginners, too!

## Z

Of course, if you don't yet know what else to do, one thing you can *always* do in *any* song is play the "**Z**" chord (similar to the "chop" of a bluegrass mandolin): just mute all four strings by touching them gently (but *not* pressing down!) with all the fingers of your left hand, and strum away with your right hand for a pleasant percussive sound.

FYI: Most of the professional ukulele players we follow are from the UK, Canada, and New Zealand, so they pronounce this letter "zed", not "zee".

## C6

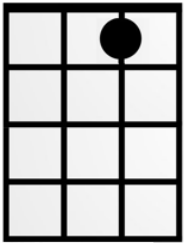


If you just strum or pluck the open strings without touching any frets at all, you will hear a **C6** chord. Jazzy! If a song calls for a regular "C" (or "C7", or some other kind of C chord), try this open chord instead; it just might work. Not always, but sometimes.

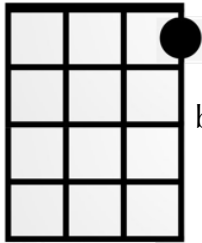
Bonus: C6 contains all the same notes as A minor 7 (**Am7**), and it can also usually replace a regular A minor chord (More on that later).

Here are a few matching pairs of easy fancy chords; James Hill calls them **“chord twins”**. When reading the fingering descriptions, beware: The strings are numbered from 1 (closest to the floor) to 4 (closest to the player’s nose). But on the fretboard diagrams, string 1 is on the *right* and string 4 is on the *left*.

**F(add9)**

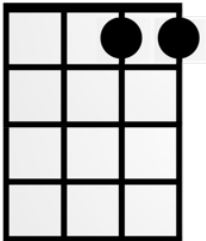


**C7**



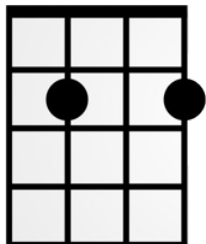
This one-finger F chord (first fret, second string) can often replace a standard two-finger F chord, and also sounds ever-so-slightly jazzy. Its twin is C7 (first fret, first string). With only a tiny movement of one finger between two adjacent strings, you can play a two-chord song in the key of F like “Jambalaya” or our simplified version of “Singing in the rain”.

**F(add9)sus4**

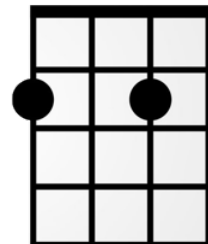


Here’s another sibling of the “twins” above; it has an extra-complicated name, but F(add9)sus4 can still be played with just one finger (or two if you prefer), pressing down *both* the first and second strings at the first fret. In our version of “Lean on me” in the key of F, it replaces a standard B-flat (Bb) chord — which would normally take *four* fingers!

**G6**



**“Hawaiian” D7**



The two-finger G6 chord (second fret, first and third strings) can sometimes replace a regular three-finger G major chord, especially if you’re looking for a mellow, jazzy, “Hawaiian” sound.

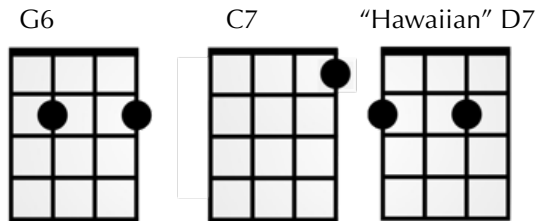
FYI: James Hill says G6 is the *best* ukulele chord!  
[https://youtu.be/sWhhw\\_mdwM](https://youtu.be/sWhhw_mdwM)

To get from there to the so-called “Hawaiian” D7 (second fret, second and fourth strings), just move each finger over to the next string! This one is much easier to play than the standard D and D7 fingerings, which require multiple fingers and/or awkward hand positions.

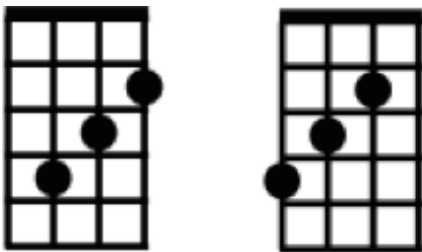
Equipped with this pair (and one of the “C” chords mentioned earlier), you can play lots of two- and three-chord songs in the key of G. Or ...

## “Hawaiian Blues” in G

Using a slightly different set of three chords you already know, you can play the blues (approximately) in the key of G! A typical 12-bar blues progression uses three different “dominant 7th” chords, but we can cheat a little and use G6 (*instead of G7*), C7, and “Hawaiian” D7. The Ukulele Club Theme Song uses these three chords.



## Em and B7

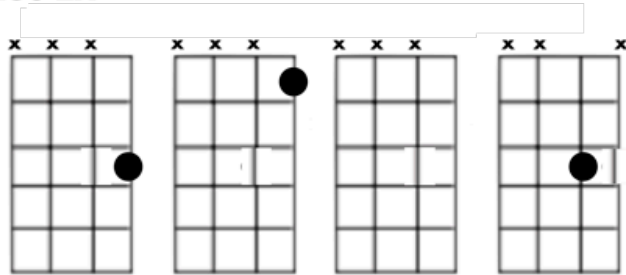


This pair of twins is a little more challenging, because each of them requires three fingers and a wider span across the fretboard. With E minor (second fret, first string; third fret, second string; fourth fret, third string) and B7 (second fret, second string; third fret, third string; fourth fret, fourth string) you can play two-chord songs in the key of E minor.

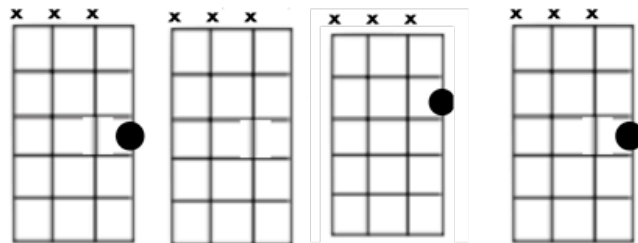
And by combining these with the open Am7 (aka C6), you can play *three*-chord songs in minor keys, such as “O Mary, don’t you weep” and the theme song from the 1960s “Spider-man” cartoon (which, as it happens, uses a 12-bar blues pattern)!

**Individual notes for the "Coming out of here" song**  
 ("x" means "Don't play this string!")

**CHORUS 2x**

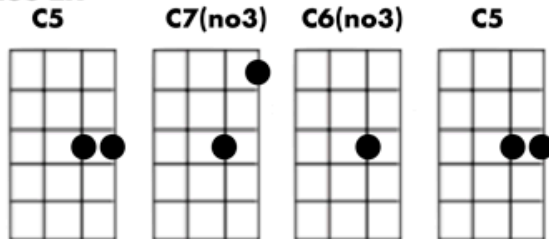


**END OF VERSE**

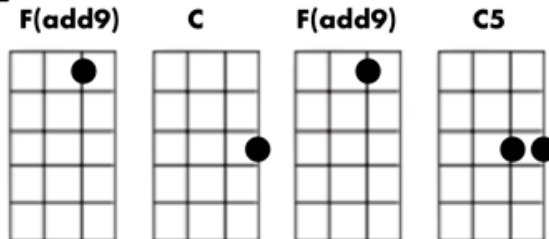


**Fancy chords for the "Coming out of here" song**

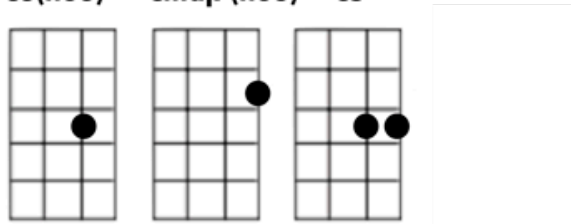
**CHORUS 2x**



**VERSE**



**C6(no3)      Cmaj7(no3)      C5**



**Everywhere I look there's bears**  
(by Sheri Wells-Jensen)

(Original version)

C F  
Everywhere I look there's bears;

G7 C  
Everywhere I look there's bears;

Am7 Dm7  
Everywhere I look, oh, everywhere I look, oh

G7 C  
Everywhere I look there's bears.

(Simplified version)

C F  
Everywhere I look there's bears;

G7 C  
Everywhere I look there's bears;

C F  
Everywhere I look, oh, everywhere I look, oh

G7 C  
Everywhere I look there's bears.