

## General Instructions for Practicing Your Ukulele

Sports people start off their practices with warm up exercises, then they focus on improving particular skills before they finish off with a game. In the same way, ukulele players need to do warm up exercises, focus on improving particular skills, and finish off with some fun tunes we already know. So here is how you should spend your ukulele practice time:

### 1. Tune your ukulele

**2. Check your holding position:** make sure the tip of your ukulele is pointing to 2 o'clock and the bottom to 8 o'clock.

**3. Check your pick holding position:** make sure your pick is sitting only on the first bone of your finger and that you have a straight line from the tip of your thumb up to your elbow.

**5. Left hand finger exercises:** practice on all 4 strings. Time yourself and try to get a little faster every day.

**6. Your Chord focus piece for the day:** one of the chord progressions or songs you have that you are going to work really hard on, focusing on one thing at a time. For example:

a. You might need to clap and count out the strum rhythm first, and then attempt strumming it with no chords.

b. You might need to go through the chords and remind yourself where they are or practice changing from one to the other until you can do it quickly (no strumming while you practice this).

c. You might need to listen to the CD a few times to get to know by ear when the chord changing happens and how to strum in time with the music.

d. You might play all the way through slowly, never stopping strumming even while you take time to find the different chords.

e. You might want to go over the tune in small bits, getting each bit right before learning the next.

f. Always finish by playing all the way through the tune. Don't worry about any mistakes – they're the bits you can fix up the next day. Just enjoy playing along with the CD, or singing the song through a few times.

**Really think about your piece, what you've got to get right, and work hard on it. Don't just play it through twice and say you've practiced it – that's playing not practicing!** After you've done lots of work to increase your skills and learn the piece, then you can start to enjoy playing it. If it's meant to be fun and lively, play it like that!

**7. Performance Piece:** If you are involved in the orchestra, or have a concert coming up, practice at least one of those pieces per day for confidence building.

**8. Review:** This is really important – play through one or two of your older pieces just for fun, so you can finish your practice with something that makes you smile and makes you want to get back on the ukulele again tomorrow.

**9. Do some mucking around on your instrument:** make up a tune; try and pick out a tune from the radio or a song you know; try writing your own songs – choose a different chord and strum pattern to start with each time you try.

If you can be really focused like this each day, your playing will improve dramatically. So get to it!