

Chuck, Schmute, and Other Strumming Mysteries Revealed

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Let's talk about your strumming! There are various techniques that you might encounter on the road to ukulele greatness, and some are more perplexing than others. This workshop will help to de-mystify some of these popular sounds and add some exercises to your practice regiment.

Strumming Technique

Everybody strums a little bit differently. A few tips:

Location matters. Think of the area between the top of the body to the bridge as a giant tone knob for your ukulele. Play near the top over the fretboard and you'll get the sweet spot: most warm ukulele strumming happens just above the soundhole. Play over the soundhole for a little more volume. Play near the bridge for a tinny, trebly tone. Experiment till you get the sound you want. You should be able to use all your strumming and plucking techniques in each zone.

Index finger tips. The index finger is my go-to strumming machine. I aim for the center of my nail and use a flicking motion. This helps alleviate any stress of the arm and the elbow and makes fast strumming a breeze. For an upstrum, use the flesh of your finger and flick upwards. I usually keep my hand open while strumming, and only connect my thumb and index finger when I'm chucking or trying to strum a little harder.

Minimize your movements for max speed. The farther your hand and arm move, the more work you're doing, and the slower your strum will be. Try to use a flicking motion and rotate your wrist so you don't need to work so hard. I try to strum fairly lightly and in a small area, just about the width of all four strings, then increase the strength and speed of my strum from there.

Special moves

Fret Hand Mute. This is the first "chucking" sound to pick up because it's easy – hold your fretting fingers gently against the strings and then strum normally with your strumming hand. This creates a light percussion noise. It's also the position your hand will need to achieve in order to create a "shmute", as well as muting for reggae strums. The key word is "relax." If you relax your fingers (don't squeeze!) you'll get this move, no problem.

Chuck. The essential mystery of the ukulele. Chuck is what happens when you do the "Fret Hand Mute" in your strumming hand. It's two things at once – muting with your strumming hand, and strumming with your strumming hand. Practice by holding your strumming hand against the strings. Flick the strings with your fingers to get a weak percussive sound. Then, try to strum harder while still making contact with the fleshy part of your hand. Try it every day and you'll get it eventually.

Shmute. A strum followed immediately by a mute, hence, "shmute" was born. Works best when you practice your fret hand mute first, then attempt to strum a chord and immediately mute after. This is perfect for breaks in the song where you want silence after a chord (think "we used to sing" during Brown Eyed Girl), and for that Motown style guitar on beat 2 sound. This is also the way to get a nice jazz swing sound out of your uke.

Slap. No, we're not playing bass. A slap is a useful, effective, easy way to include percussion in your strumming. Simply open the strumming hand and tap the ukulele in the same place you would strum. This is easiest if you're already strumming with your thumb, but can be done in various combinations with strumming to achieve different effects.

Roll. Use 3 or 4 fingers while strumming to create a "roll" effect. You can practice with individual fingers (I like to warm up each finger separately until they can all strum with equal power) until you're ready to close your hand into a fist and then let them fly! Once you're coordinated, a wrist rotation goes a long way to create this stroke. Works great with an island strum to create a sort of "rhumba" or "tango" kind of sound.

Triplet Strum. Another strumming mystery revealed, this one is a fun one to practice. There are two popular ways to create a triplet strum:

D [index down] + [thumb up] + [index up] 1	U [index down] + [thumb up] + [index up] 2	U [index down] + [thumb up] + [index up] 3	D [index down] + [thumb down] + [index up] 1	D [index down] + [thumb down] + [index up] 2	U [index down] + [thumb down] + [index up] 3
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Simply practice by counting 1-2-3 for each stroke until you can do it faster and with confidence. I also love using the first pattern (down-up-up) as sixteenth notes instead of triplets to add a quick rhythm to my patterns.

Triplet Exercises and Tricks

D D D DUU 1 2 3 4+a	D D D DDU 1 2 3 4+a	D DUU D DUU 1 2+a 3 4+a	D DDU D DDU 1 2+a 3 4+a
Island strum triplets D DUU D U U D U 1 triplet 2 + 3 + 4 +	Island strum triplets D DDU D U U D U 1 triplet 2 + 3 + 4 +		
Island strum fake roll D UU D U U D U 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	Rock strum sixteenths D D D DU-UD D D-UU 1 + 2 +a3e+ 4 + aa		

Mute, Chuck, Shmute

1. D x D x
2. D D x D
3. D xU UDU
4. D xU UxU

Slap Strum

1. D x D x
2. x D x D
3. D xD x
4. D xU Ux

Roll

1. D RU UDU
2. RU DU DU DU

Shmute Only

1. D D D DU
(s)

2. D D D DU DU D D DU (s)
3. D D D DU-UD D DU (s)
4. D D D DU-UD D D (s)

Mutes Only

1. DUDUxxxxDUDUxxxx
2. DUDUxxxUxxxxDUDU
3. DUDUxxxUxUxxDUDU
4. x D x D
5. xxDUxxDU
6. xxDUxxDx

Combo: Mutes + Chucks

1. DUDUxxxxDUDUxxxx
2. DUDUxxxUxUxxXUDU

Combo: Shmute + Chuck

1. D xU x (s) (s)
2. DUDUxUDU-U--xUDU (s s)
3. DUDU

Combo: Shmute + Slap

1. D xD x (s) (s)
2. D D xD D (s) (s)

Come Together

Beatles

The Cool Riff Thing

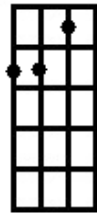
A-----8-----5

E-----s5-----

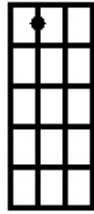
C-2--2-----

G-----

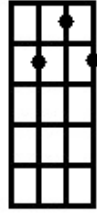
Dm



A7



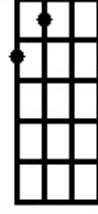
G7



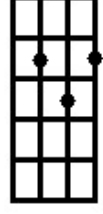
Bm



A



G



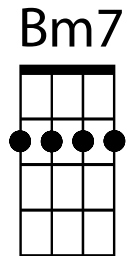
Intro: Dm x4

(Dm) Here come old flattop, he come grooving up slowly

He got joo-joo eyeball, he one holy roller

(A7) He got hair down to his knee

(G7) Got to be a joker he just do what he please



Interlude: Dm x4

(Dm) He wear no shoeshine, he got toe-jam football

He got monkey finger, he shoot coca-cola

(A7) He say "I know you, you know me"

(G7) One thing I can tell you is you got to be free

(Bm) Come together **(A)** right **(G)** now **(A)** over me

Interlude: Dm x4

(Dm) He bag production, he got walrus gumboot

He got Ono sideboard, he one spinal cracker

(A7) He got feet down below his knee

(G7) Hold you in his armchair you can feel his disease

(Bm) Come together **(A)** right **(G)** now **(A)** over me

Interlude: Dm x2

Solo: Dm x 4 A7 x4

Interlude: Dm x 2

(Dm) He roller-coaster, he got early warning

He got muddy water, he one mojo filter

(A7) He say "One and one and one is three"

(G7) Got to be good-looking cos he's so hard to see

(Bm) Come together **(A)** right **(G)** now **(A)** over me

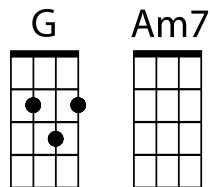
Interlude: Dm x 4

Outro Dm x 8

"Come together..."

Spread a Little Aloha

Mana'o Company



Intro Tab:

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A-----5-3-----2-0-----G-----Am-----G-----Am
E-----2-3---7-5-3---5-3-2---3-2-0---2-
C-2(s) 6-4---2---2-0---1s2-2-1-2-0-2-----7-5-4---5-4-2---4-2-0---2-
G-----7-5-4---5-4-2---4-2-0---2-
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Intro: G Am (bass plays G and D throughout)

Verse 1

(G)People are you (Am)listening to (G)what we're about to (Am)say
(G)See we're on a (Am)mission, (G)trying to find a (Am)way
If (G)you and (Am)me make a (G)guarantee (Am)
(G)To spread a little (Am)aloha around the (G)world (Am)
And (G)I know (Am)we, we can (G)work it (Am)out
(G)and make this (Am)world a better (G)place for you and for (Am)me

Chorus

(G)A-L-O-H-(Am)A, a little (G)aloha in our (Am)day
(G)Spread a little (Am)aloha around the (G)world (Am)
(G)A-L-O-H-(Am)A, a little (G)aloha in our (Am)day
(G)Spread a little (Am)aloha around the (G)world (Am)

Verse 2

(G)Could you (Am)imagine (G)all around the (Am)world
(G)A little (Am)aloha in (G)every boy and (Am)girl
(G)Could you (Am)imagine how (G)simple life could (Am)be
(G)With a little (Am)aloha in (G)you and in (Am)me
Let's (G)spread a little bit of (Am)aloha
(G)Put a little love in your (Am)heart
(G)Take a little dip in the (Am)ocean
Oh (G)yeah, (Oh yeah) uh-(Am)huh (uh-huh) **Repeat Chorus**

Verse 3

(G)Aloha means (Am)hello and (G)aloha means (Am)goodbye
and (G)aloha means I (Am)love you and I (G)want to take it (Am)higher
I wanna get (G)high (Am)with a little (G)aloha (Am)
I can touch the (G)sky (Am)with a little (G)aloha, (Am)aloha
Let's (G)spread a little bit of (Am)aloha
(G)Put a little love in your (Am)heart
(G)Take a little dip in the (Am)ocean
Oh (G)yeah, (Oh yeah) uh-(Am)huh (uh-huh) **Repeat Chorus**

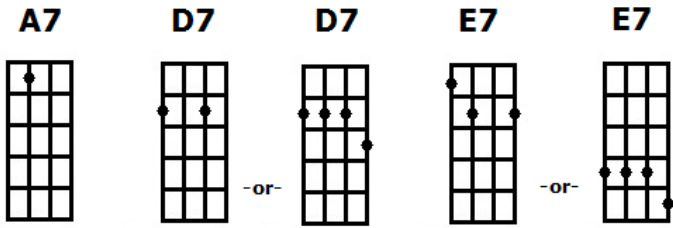
Kiss

Prince

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

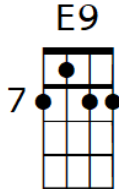
Strum pattern: D x x D x x x x

DUxxxxxDUxxxxxxxxxx
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



Intro: E9

DUDUDUDUD --uh!
 A-----77777777--
 E-----77777777--
 C-----66666666--
 G-----77777777--



Intro: A7x3 A7(break)

Verse 1

You don't have to be (**A7**)beautiful to turn me on
 I just need your (**A7**)body baby from dusk till dawn
 You don't need (**D7**)experience to turn me out
 You just leave it all (**A7**)up to me, I'm gonna show you what it's all about

Chorus

You don't have to be (**E7**)rich to be my girl
 You don't have to be (**D7**)cool to rule my world
 Ain't no particular (**E7**)sign I'm more compatible with
 I just want your (**D7**)extra time and your (**E9**).....Kiss

Interlude: A7 x4

Verse 2

You got to not talk (**A7**)dirty, baby, if you wanna impress me
 You can't be too flirty, mama, I know how to undress me (Yeah)
 I want to be your (**D7**)fantasy, maybe you could be mine
 You just leave it all (**A7**)up to me, we could have a good time

Chorus

You don't have to be (**E7**)rich to be my girl
 You don't have to be (**D7**)cool to rule my world
 Ain't no particular (**E7**)sign I'm more compatible with
 I just want your (**D7**)extra time and your (**E9**).....Kiss

Interlude: A7x3, A7(break)

A7x8+riff,
D7x4 A7x3, A7(break)

Riff: DU strum... D U U D D U U D D U U
 A-10-----10-9-9---10-10-9-9--10-10-9-9-
 E--9-----9-9-9---9--9-9-9---9--9-9-9-
 C--9-----9-9-9---9--9-9-9---9--9-9-9-
 G-----

Verse 3

Women not (**A7**)girls rule my world, I said they rule my world
 Act your (**A7**)age, mama, not your shoe size, maybe we could do the twirl
 You don't have to watch (**D7**)Dynasty to have an attitude
 You just leave it all (**A7**)up to me my love will be your food

Repeat Chorus, except really really high.