

Tuning

The biggest problem for beginners with the ukulele is keeping the instrument in tune. New strings will stretch, cheap ukuleles have loose tuning pegs, heat and humidity will make your strings stretch and contract, and even vigorous playing will yank them out of tune. Until your uke settles down, you'll need to tune up before, and even during, every session. People with a good ear can just listen to the strings, but most of us need help. Here are the most common ways to tune your uke.

Electronically

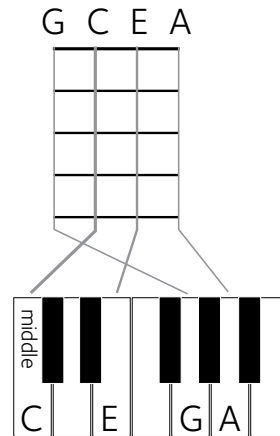
If you're not yet experienced enough to hear whether strings are in tune or not, I recommend an electronic tuner (page 22). These have largely replaced the pitch pipes and tuning forks of the past. The equivalents of those pitch pipes can now be found on the Web:

www.fleamarketmusic.com/e-tuner/
www.get-tuned.com/ukulele_tuner.php

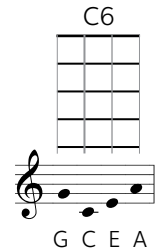


With a piano

You can match the uke strings to piano keys: the lowest string is middle C. Note the key for the re-entrant G string.



Today, most ukuleles use what's called C (or C6) tuning, after the chord you get when the open strings are G, C, E, and A.



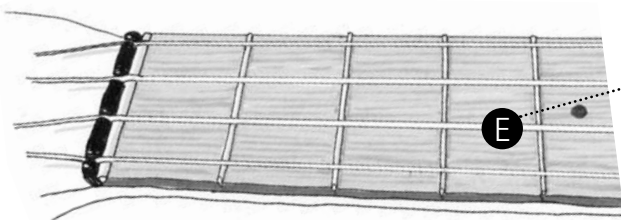
Another tuning, D6, was more common in the 1920s, and is still dominant in Europe. Every string is tuned two semitones higher (so you can fake D6 by putting a capo on the second fret).



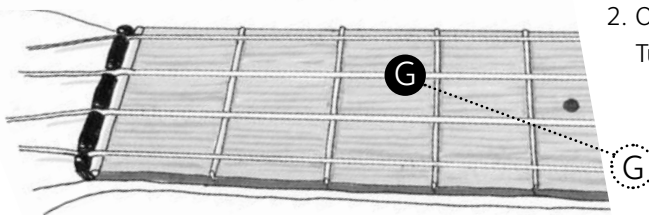
Tenor ukuleles can be tuned GCEA, with a low G; baritones usually DGBE. There are other more obscure tunings as well.

Relative tuning

If you don't have anything to test the uke's tuning with, you can at least get it in tune with itself.

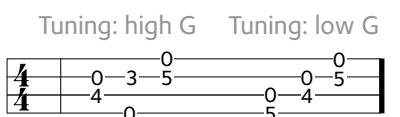


1. Start with the open C string. The **4th** fret on the **C** string is the note E. Play this and tune the E string until it matches.

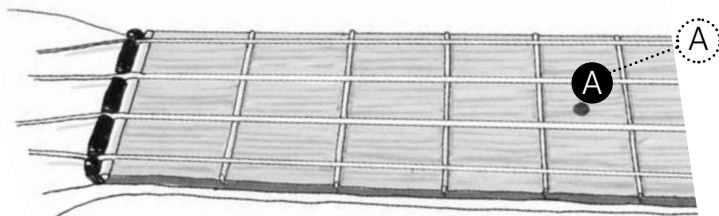


2. On the **E** string, the **3rd** fret is a G. Tune the G string to it.

3. And the **5th** fret on the **E** string is A, so tune the A string to it.



See page 30 for how to read tablature.



Just remember "See four, E three five"