

Geoff White's Beginner's chord and strum consolidation Sunshine Coast Ukulele Festival May 2024

In this two-page workshop we'll be looking at 7 groups of chords that occur frequently in our songs. Where possible we'll avoid using barre chords, but if you can handle those, great, that brings more versatility to your playing, and better musicality all round.

The 7 chord groups that we're focusing on are shown on the next page, together with their chord shapes.

If you're playing just the one line of chords, e.g **C Am F G7**, finish with a single strum on the **C**, the opening chord of this group. It's like a full stop at the end of a sentence.

If you're playing all seven groups of chords, then finish with a single strum on the **Bb**, which is the opening chord of the last group.

We'll be playing four-beats-to-the-bar (4/4) with emphasis on beats **Two** and **Four**. More on this below.

The simplest strum pattern is **One Two Three Four** with the same emphasis on each strum. This will get you through a song but it will sound very "flat", perhaps even a tad boring.

An enhanced version has emphasis only on each second strum, i.e. One **Two** Three **Four**, with a single downwards strum on each beat.

Now, if we count "one AND two AND three AND four" etc, that gives us a further improved version, and with this pattern we play an upwards strum on each AND, while keeping the emphasis on beats **TWO** and **FOUR**. It sounds like this:

One & **TWO** & three & **FOUR** & one & **TWO** etc
down up **DOWN** up down up **DOWN** up down up **DOWN** etc

Let's practice these strums on the "C" chord for a few minutes, then move to the chord groups, which are: C Am F G7, D Bm G A7, Eb Cm Ab Bb7, F Dm Bb C7, G Em C D7, A F#m D E7, and Bb Gm Eb F7, and ending on Bb. This last group can be a bit tricky.