

Andy's ukulele blog

LESSON 3:

Your Second Chord

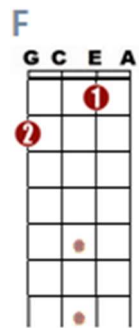
Now we've done C we are going to move to F.

There is a reason for this, which I will develop later, but for now all I will say is that F has a special relationship with C. F is the subdominant note in the scale of C major.

To form F, you place finger 1 at the first fret on string 2, and finger 2 on the second fret of string 1. As with C you use the tips of your fingers to hold down the strings. The reason you use the tips of the fingers is that encourages to hold your wrist at the right angle, and it helps keep your fingers from fouling the other strings.

Now give it a good strum!

Isn't that pleasing?



There is a chord diagram for F which looks like this.

Notice that the circles representing the fingers are not resting on the frets but between them. In reality, you hold the string down just behind the required fret.

If you hold the string down directly over the fret what you will find is that rather than getting a ringing note you get a much duller note. There are times when you might want that for musical effect, but that's complicated stuff we'll deal with later.

Anyway, now you have two notes you can try busking, or nurdling. This involves repetitively switching chords while strumming a rhythm, and it is good practice.

Play C twice – switch to F – play F twice – switch back to C – play twice - etc.

Do it to the following rhythm: 1 2, 1 2, 1 2, 1 2, 1 2 ... (You change chords at the comma).

This does two things: -

1. It establishes at an early stage that the ukulele is a rhythm instrument.
2. It builds muscle memory. If you do it often enough your fingers will find their own way to the chord shapes without you having to think about this. Once you have done this you are a ukulele player (just not a very good one yet).

You should have noticed that as you switch between C and F your third finger is always in the right position to hold down C. This was why you use your third finger to play C. Next time, you will also notice this feature in switching between C and the next chord we're looking at, G.