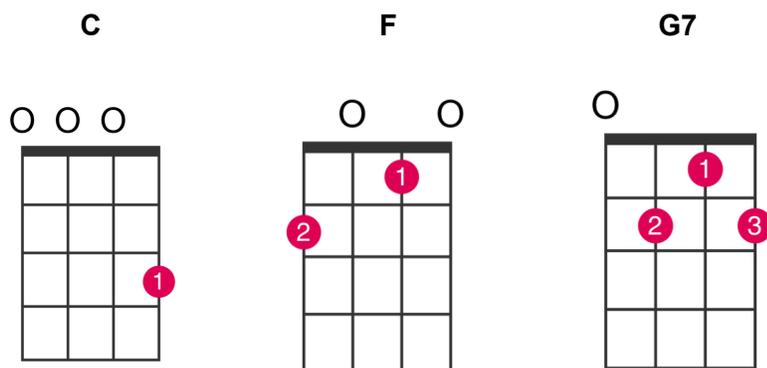


Manitoba Hal's Blues Ukulele For Beginners

In this 3-part, online workshop, we'll be covering the basics of playing the blues on your (GCEA tuned) ukulele.

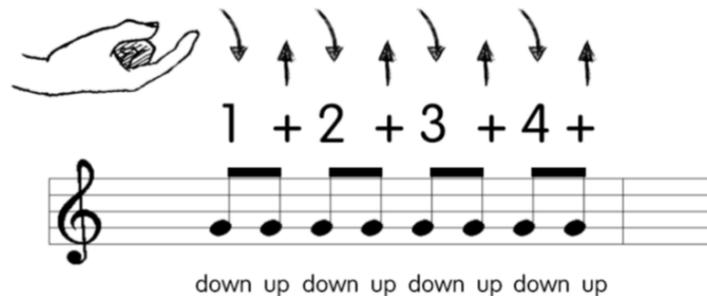
Chords

For these workshops we'll be using the chords C, F and G7 with some small variations along the way.



The Strum

There are many different ways to strum the blues, but the method that I find the most effective is a simple 8th note strum. Just as easy as 4 downstrokes and 4 upstrokes. I count it out like this; (1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and). So each count is one beat with a **downstroke** and the 'and' is an **upstroke** falling in between the downstrokes at even intervals. It should be an easy relaxed strum with the downstroke being approximately twice as loud as the upstroke. Practice this strum at various tempos until you can deliver it smoothly without thinking.

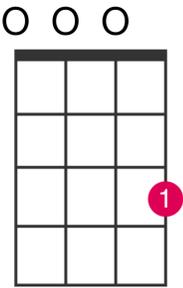
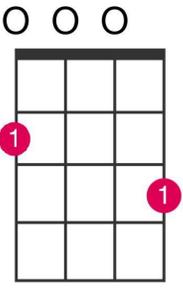
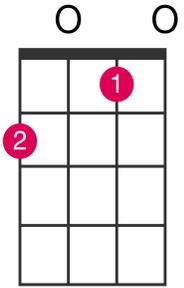
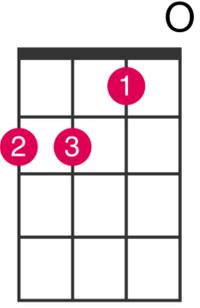


The Shuffle

One of the things that really defines the blues is the shuffle. It is a bouncy strum made up of the eighth note strum from above combined with adding a “shuffle” note to the chord you are playing.

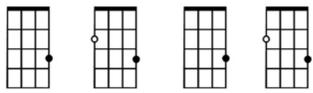
In technical terms you are adding a 6th note to the chord. In a C major chord for example you would add an A note to achieve the shuffle.

Let's look at the chords.

	Chord	Shuffle
C		
F		

The shuffle stroke is played by playing the root chord on the first and third beat of the measure and the shuffle chord on the second and fourth beats of the measure. In the case of our C chord that looks like this.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +



down up down up down up down up

12 Bar Blues

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G7	F	C	G7

Turnaround Pattern

This is the foundational blues turnaround. It isn't the easiest to play but once you start listening for it, you'll hear it all over the place.

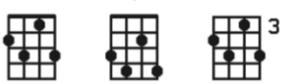
The timing counts out as 1 and a 2 and a 3 and a 4, 1, 2, 3 (let 3 ring for one beat).

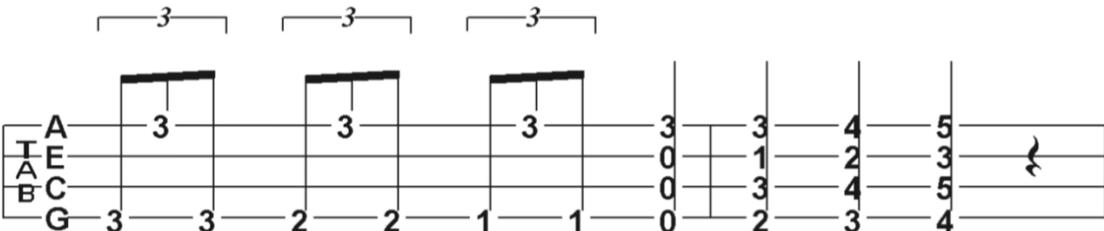
You can play this turnaround in other keys by simply moving it up the neck. For example, if you start it on the 5th fret (instead of the 3rd as indicated) it will be in the key of D. The fingering remains the same overall so once you master it you can use it all over the place.

C



F7 **F#7** **G7**





12 Bar Blues Examples

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G7	F	C	G7

Sweet Home Chicago

Robert Johnson

C

Oh, baby, don't you want to go

F C

Oh, baby, don't you want to go

G7 F C G7

Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago

Oh, baby, don't you want to go

Oh, baby, don't you want to go

Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago

Now one and one is two, two and two is four

I'm heavy loaded baby, I'm booked, I gotta go

Cryin', baby, honey, don't you want to go

Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago

Now two and two is four, four and two is six

You goin' keep on monkeyin' 'round here friend-boy

You goin' get your business all in a trick

But I'm cryin', baby, honey, don't you want to go

Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago

Now six and two is eight, eight and two is ten

Friend-boy, she trick you one time she sure gon' do it again

But I'm cryin', hey baby, don't you want to go

Back to the land of California, to my sweet home Chicago

12 Bar Blues Examples

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G7	F	C	G7

Kansas City

C

I'm going to Kansas City, Kansas City here I come

F

C

I'm going to Kansas City, Kansas City here I come

G7

F

C

G7

They got a crazy way of loving there and I'm gonna get me one

I'm gonna be standing on the corner

12th Street and Vine

I'm gonna be standing on the corner

12th Street and Vine

With my Kansas City baby and a bottle of Kansas City wine

Well, I might take a plane; I might take a train

But if I have to walk, I'm going just the same

I'm going to Kansas City

Kansas City here I come

They got some crazy little women there and I'm gonna get me one

8 Bar Blues

The 8 bar blues is very similar to the 12 bar, but with a few differences -- not least among them the fact that it's 4 bars shorter. There is a tendency to switch much more quickly to the 5 chord (G) before the 4 chord (F) as illustrated below.

C	G7	F	F7
C	G7	C	G7

Key to the Highway - 8 Bar Blues

Big Bill Broonzy

 C G7 F F7
I got the key to the highway, I'm booked out and bound to go, I'm gonna
C G7 C G7
leave here runnin, ain't coming back no more

I'm going back to the border, where I'm better known, I'm gonna ride this old
highway, ain't coming back no more

Give me one more kiss, mama, just before I go, I'm gonna leave here running,
ain't coming back no more

Now, when the moon peaks over the mountain, yeah.. You know I'll be on my way
I'm gonna walk, walk this ol' highway, deep until the break of day

So long and good-bye, yes, I had to say good-bye,
'Cause I'm gonna walk, walk this ol' highway, deep 'til the day I die

8 Bar Blues

C	G7	C	F
C	G7	C	G7

Trouble In Mind

Jimmy Witherspoon 1920

C **G7**
Trouble in mind, I'm blue

C **F**
But I won't be blue always,

C **G7** **C** **G7**
'Cause that sun is gonna shine in my back door someday

I'm going down to the river
I'm going to take me a rocking chair
and if the blues don't leave me, I rock on away from here

Trouble in mind, I'm blue
But I won't be blue always,
'Cause that sun is gonna shine in my back door someday

Trouble in mind, that's true
I have almost lost my mind
Life ain't worth living, I feel like I could die

Trouble in mind, I'm blue
My poor heart is healing slow
I've never had such trouble in my whole life before

I'm gonna lay my head on some lonesome railroad line
and let that 2:19 special ease my troubled mind

Trouble in mind, I'm blue,
But I won't be blue always
'Cause that sun is gonna shine in my back door someday

16 Bar Blues

The 16 bar blues is a much longer (and often jazzier) blues pattern. There is more emphasis on melodic licks and riffing in this style of playing given the many musical passages without vocals.

C	C	C	C
C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G7	F	C	G7

Hootchie Coochie Man

Muddy Waters/Walter Dixon

C

The gypsy woman told my mother
Before I was born
I got a boy child's coming
He's gonna be a son of a gun
He gonna make pretty womens
Jump and shout
Then the world wanna know
What this all about

F

'Cause you know I'm here

C

Everybody knows I'm here

G7

Yeah, you know I'm a hoochie coochie man

F C G7

Everybody knows I'm here

I got a black cat bone, I got a mojo too

I got the Johnny Conquer Root

I'm gonna mess with you

I'm gonna make you girls

Lead me by my hand

Then the world'll know

The hoochie coochie man

But you know I'm here

Everybody knows I'm here

Yeah, you know I'm a hoochie coochie man

Everybody knows I'm here

On the seventh hours

On the seventh day

On the seventh month

The seven doctors said

He was born for good luck

And that you'll see

I got seven hundred dollars

Don't you mess with me

But you know I'm here

Everybody knows I'm here

Yeah, you know I'm a hoochie coochie man

Everybody knows I'm here

16 Bar Blues Examples - variation

This song has a variation in the 16 bar pattern that is worth examining. Notice the changes in pattern from the Muddy Waters tune. Also, notice the addition of the minor chord at bar 12. This is a nice change that really catches the ear and makes this a pleasure to play and listen to.

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
F	F	C	Am
G7	G7	C	G7

Goin' Down The Road Feelin' Bad

C
I'm going down this road feeling bad
F C
I'm going down this road feeling bad
F C Am
I'm going down this road feeling bad, lord, lord
G7 C G7
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

I'm down in the jailhouse on my knees
Down in the jailhouse on my knees
Down in the jailhouse on my knees, lord, lord
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

They feed me on corn bread and beans
They feed me on corn bread and beans
They feed me on corn bread and beans, lord, lord
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

Got two dollar shoes on my feet
Got two dollar shoes on my feet
Two dollar shoes they hurt my feet, lord, lord
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

It takes a ten dollar shoe to fit my foot
It takes a ten dollar shoe to fit my foot
It takes a ten dollar shoe to fit my foot,
Great God
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

I'm going where the weather fits my clothes
I'm going where the weather fits my clothes
I'm going where the weather fits my
clothes, lord lord
And I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way

Chord Chart for All Keys

One thing that all blues players should know are the chords that are used in any key. This will help you with changing the key of a song to suit your voice or to suit the voice of a singer you are accompanying. Here is a complete chart of the chords used in every key and their numbered location. In the blues you will often use the 1 chord, the 4 chord and the 5 chord (as a seventh chord).

Don't be confused by this numbering method. It is merely a shorthand that is used to tell someone a progression without saying the chord names. For example a blues player might say to another musician, "we're playing a standard 12 bar in D using the 1, 4 and 5 but watch for the seventh." That tells you that the Key is D and the chords are D, G and A7 and that you're playing a basic 12 bar pattern.

KEY	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°	I
	1	2m	3m	4	5	6m	7°	1
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B°	C
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#°	D
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#°	E
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm	E°	F
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#°	G
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#°	A
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#°	B

Circle of Fifths

The circle of fifths can be a terrific shortcut to transposing as well as finding alternate chords for any song. If you imagine a pie shape with the C chord at the 12 o'clock position you'll notice that the F chord is to the left and the G chord is to the right. These are your blues chords right there. Beneath each of these are their respective relative minor chords. These are chords you can substitute for the corresponding major in most cases. These chords are also in the key of C, as you can see in the chord chart. The key of C has the following chords in it: C Dm Em F G Am Bdim.

To transpose a song, simply take that pie shape and rotate it so that the key you want to play in becomes the top center of the pie (where the C is now). For example if I wanted to play a blues song in A then I would rotate my pie shape to the right to put A at the top and I would find D to the left and E to the right. Easy!

