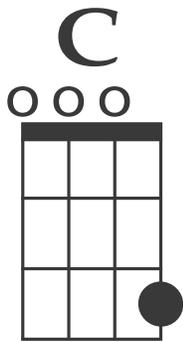


Make sure that the students are striking all 4 strings with a fairly brisk downward motion of the thumb. Some people get so focused on the fretting hand that the strumming hand is forgotten. This is their first lesson in the disconnect between the two hands.

The C Chord

Now that we believe the Little Beastie to be in tune, it's time to play a **chord**.

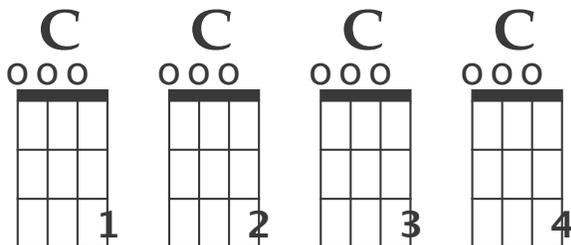
A chord is a combination of two or more notes that are played at the same time. Sometimes they blend together harmoniously, as **consonant chords**, and sometimes they blend together *less* harmoniously, as **dissonant chords**. And of course there is a whole range of chords from the most consonant to the most dissonant, and what may sound consonant to you may sound dissonant to me.



The **C** chord is the Red Giant of the ukulele chord universe. It's by far the most common chord, and is among the easiest to play. Think of the **C** chord as playing the lead role in a blockbuster musical supported by a cast of thousands. Additional major, minor and walk-on characters will appear, and some kind of plot will develop along the way.

The **C** chord diagram shows that *some finger* is holding the 1st string at the 3rd fret, and that the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings are left to ring open; witness the little "O's" above the nut. (There is no musical distinction between fretted and unfretted notes within a chord. Notes be notes.)

Ah, but now, *which finger?* Well, we could designate the same one always, for the sake of consistency. But you might as well realize from the very start: **The Ukulele Is Options**. You have (I hope) 4 fingers, and any one of them could handle the **C** chord fingering. So..... The question arises: *What other chords are you likely to visit?* Which fingers might you want to keep *free* to expedite the change to the *next* chord. We have exactly 4 options (just use a downward motion of the thumb to set those strings a-ringing):



.....where:

- 1 is the **1st** finger (index finger, forefinger)
- 2 is the **2nd** finger (middle finger, long finger)
- 3 is the **3rd** finger (ring finger)
- 4 is the **4th** finger (pinky finger)

In the **C Chord Family**, which we are about to explore, it's best to go with either the 3rd or 4th finger. The 3rd finger is the stronger of the two, so it's a good default fingering. Then again, the 4th finger allows easier access to the chords that usually show up in the same songs as **C**, such as **F**, **G**, **G7**, **Am** and **Em**. Try both.