

MUSIC FOR GOOD HEALTH

UKULELE FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART



JOHN HEYWORTH

PART 2 PLAYING CHORDS

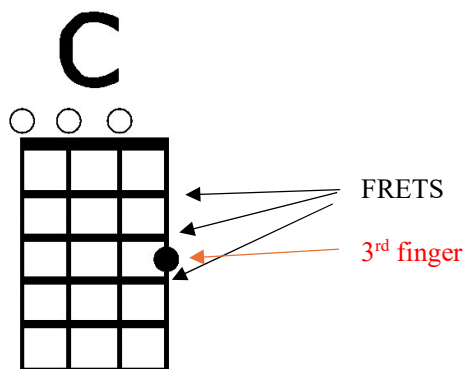


C chord

C Chord is a *C major chord* – but we just call it a *C chord*).

Place your **left hand** in position with the thumb behind the neck. With curved fingers, place your 3rd finger on the 1st string AND press down on the 3rd fret - not too hard.

(Don't squeeze you hand – it is not a vice. Use the tip of your finger just behind the fret).



Now strum the C chord with Down strokes slowly and evenly. We are in 4/4 time (4 beats per bar).

C

1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ / / / - / / / - / / / -

Now let's change between **C** (3rd finger in the left hand) and **Am7** (no fingers needed, BUT keep the hand in position for the changing of the chords).

C

Am7

C

Am7

1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ / / / - / / / - / / / -

When you are ready, try doubling the rhythm with **Down** and **Up** strokes.

C

Am7

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & - 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & - keep it even and steady.



What about D and then D U ? Try it!

C

Am7

1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ □ / □ - / □ / □ -

NEXT STEP – *Singing a song with one chord.*

We'll use a couple of simple songs that we can sing by strumming just the one chord*. We will also learn how to read a *lyric sheet* – (useful for online searches for favourite songs you would like to learn).

Frere Jacques (Brother John)*.

We will use the **C** chord – just use a simple down stroke for now – keep it steady and even.

Frere Jacques (English translation)

Starting singing note can be found by plucking the open 3rd string (it's a C note).

Chord name	C			
Strum pattern 4/4	/	/	/	/
	Are	you	sleep-	ing
	<i>(keep playing the C chord)</i>			
	/	/	/	/
	Are	you	sleep-	ing
	/	/	/	/
	Broth-	er	John	
	<i>(2 strums for John)</i>			
	/	/	/	/
	Broth-	er	John	
	/	/	/	/
	Morning	bells are	ring-	ing
	/	/	/	/
	Morning	bells are	ring-	ing
	/	/	/	/
	Ding	Dong	Dang	
	/	/	/	/
	Ding	Dong	Dang	
	<i>(2 strums for Dang)</i>			

– don't stop when the lyrics stop, keep the beat going!

But, typically, a lyric sheet often looks like this:

C
Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
Brother John, Brother John.
Morning bells are ringing
Morning bells are ringing
Ding, dong dang, Ding dong, dang.

There is no strum pattern indicated—you have to feel the beat as you sing and play. Your ear is your best guide.

See if you can play from the lyrics only - or better still - from memory. Keep a simple *down* stroke - just keep a steady beat throughout the song! 1 2 3 4 / 1 2 3 4 etc...

Let's try a couple more lyrics sheets the same way.

Again we will just use the one chord – the **C** chord. Keep a steady simple beat in 4s (count 1 2 3 4) – the strum starts on the word Farmer and keeps going with a constant down stroke strum. (*every farmer is on the 1st count*). See next page.

**Note: the actual songs need two chords – but more on that later.*

The Farmer's in the Dell*

The strum pattern starts on Farmer (Farmer is always on the 1st beat of the 4 count on each line)

- | | C | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-----------------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | / | / | / | / |
| 1. | The Farmer's in the Dell, | | | (The) |
| | The Farmer's in the Dell, | | | |
| | Hey | Ho | the Derry – oh, | |
| | The Farmer's in the Dell. | | | |
| 2. | The Farmer takes the wife, | | | |
| | The Farmer takes the wife | | | |
| | Hey | Ho | the Derry – oh | |
| | The Farmer takes the wife. | | | |
| 3. | The wife takes the child...etc. | | | |
| 4. | The child takes the dog... | | | |
| 5. | The dog takes the cat... | | | |
| 6. | The cat takes the mouse... | | | |
| 7. | The mouse takes the cheese... | | | |
| 8. | They all eat the cheese... | | | |

Finding the feel of a song from a lyrics chart takes a bit of getting used to, but hang in there, it'll come.

And remember, it's great to make mistakes, that's how we learn best!

Baa Baa Black Sheep*

C
Baa baa black sheep,
have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir,
three bags full.
One for my master,
one for my dame,
and one for the little boy,
who lives down the lane.

**Note: the songs need two chords – but more on that later.*

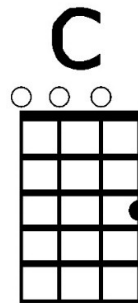
It's time to learn a new chord.

G7

G7 Chord (- G major with a flattened 7th – don't worry, we just call it **G7**)

Step by step - Play the C chord:

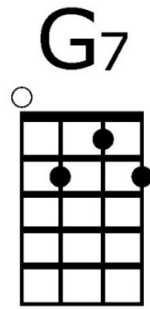
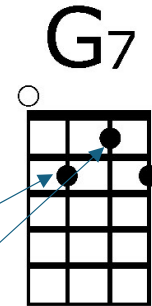
Steps



Slide the 3rd finger up to the 2nd fret.

Place the 2nd finger onto the 3rd string - 2nd fret.

Add the 1st finger in between on the 2nd string.



Now strum the G7 chord with Down strokes slowly and evenly. We are in 4/4 time (4 beats per bar).

G7

1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ / / / - / / / / - / / / / -

Now let's change between **C** (3rd finger in the left hand) and **Am7** like we have learnt already (no fingers needed, BUT keep the hand in position for changing chords when needed).

C **Am7** **C** **Am7**
1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ / / / - / / / / - / / / / - / / / / -

Now substitute **G7** for **Am7** – *slowly at first and keep trying to make even changes* -

C **G7** **C** **G7**
1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ / / / - / / / / - / / / / - / / / / -

When you are ready (**after a lot of repetition**), try doubling the rhythm with **Down** and **Up** strokes.

C **G7**
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & - 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & - etc
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

C **G7**
1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4 - etc
/ □ / □ - / □ / □ -

What about D (down stroke) and then D U (down up stroke)? Try it!

Skip To My Lou (2 chord song)

Play a single C chord (find your singing starting note from the 2nd string open *E*).

Start with simple down strums (keep them even and don't pause after each line – keep going with a steady beat). Keep playing C chord until you reach a word that indicates a chord change (G7 for the word *Skip* in the 2nd line). Again, this will take a little time to get use to when reading from a lyrics chart or chord chart, but don't worry, the more you try the easier it becomes!

1/-
C *don't stop - strum the 4th beat*
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
/ / / / - / / / /
Skip, Skip, Skip to my Lou,
G7
/ / / / - / / / /
Skip, Skip, Skip to my Lou,
C
/ / / / - / / / /
Skip, Skip, Skip to my Lou,
G7 C
/ / / / - / / / /
Skip to my Lou my darl- -ing.

2/-
C
/ / / / - / / / /
Choose your part-ner Skip to my Lou.
G7
/ / / / - / / / /
Choose your part-ner Skip to my Lou.
C
/ / / / - / / / /
Choose your part-ner Skip to my Lou.
G7 C
/ / / / - / / / /
Skip to my Lou my darl- -ing.

3/- Lost my partner, what can I do.....

4/- I'll find another one purtier than you...

Repeat from start (partner circle dance)

Slow practise is good practise. We need a smooth transition between chord changes. Once you are comfortable experiment with different strum patterns – e.g D D U has a good country feel. Have fun!

Some other *two chord* songs you might like to look up on the internet: *Hey, Soul Sister, Tom Dooley, Banana Boat Song, Jambalaya (On the Bayou), Achy Breaky Heart and many more.*

He's Got the Whole World in his Hands

African/American

Gospel style. Play a single C chord (get your singing starting note from the open 4th string G). Keep a straight beat, starting from the word *whole* (2 strums). This will be challenging to get the feel, but don't get bogged down with it, keep moving on or review previous songs. **Short playing time is often better than a prolonged session.** You'll be surprised how things start to jell in your mind without you realising it!

1/- **C**
 1 2 3 4 - 1 2 3 4
 / / / / / / / / (same pattern throughout)

He's got the *whole*- world - in His hands(*He's got the*)

G7

(He's got the) whole world in His hands

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

G7

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

2/- **C**

He's got the wind and rain His hands

G7

He's got the wind and rain in His hands

C

He's got the wind and rain His hands

G7

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

3/- **C**

He's got the little tiny baby in His hands

G7

He's got the little tiny baby in His hands

C

He's got the little tiny baby His hands

G7

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

4/- **C**

He's got you and me, brother, in His hands

G7

He's you and me, brother, in His hands

C

He's got you and me, brother, His hands

G7

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

5/- **C**

He's got you and me, sister, in His hands

G7

He's you and me, sister, in His hands

C

He's got you and me, sister, His hands

G7

C

He's got the whole world in His hands

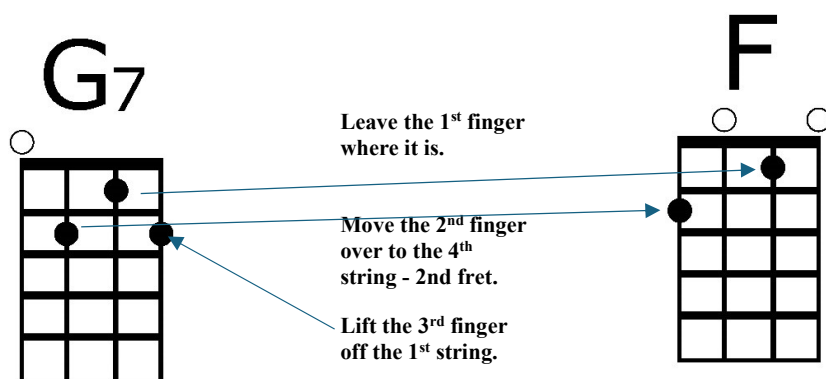
Repeat 1/-

Once you are comfortable experiment with different strum patterns e.g. - D U D U D U D U

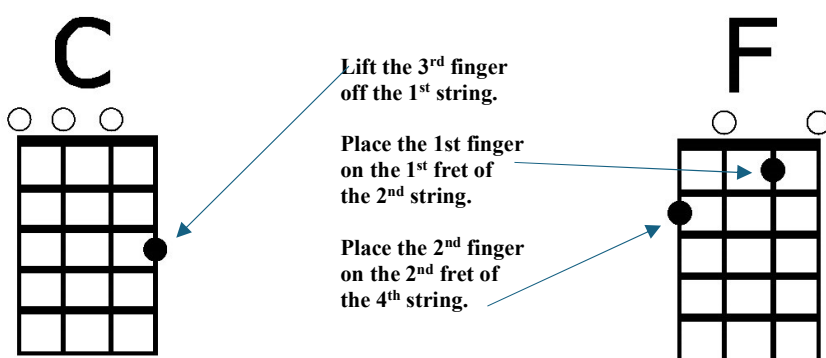
Okay, it's time to learn a new chord.

F Chord – (F major chord)

Changing from G7 to F



Changing from C to F



Practice changing chords as before.

Slow even transitions until you can do it smoothly. Then try faster strumming.

1/-

C				F				C				G7			
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

2/-

C				F				G7				C			
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

3/- (this is a very popular chord progression)

C				Am7				F				G7			
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

Don't forget to try D U strumming and D - D U and any other variation you can think of over 4 beats

Lyric/ Chord charts

There are many free lyric sites on the internet where you can find almost any song that was ever written. Sites like *GetLyrics.com*, *Chordie.com* and *ultimateguitar/ukulele.com*. Some are chord charts, others are *tabs* – tablature (we will learn about these later, but mostly you will find lyrics sheets set out like the song below (Clementine). Basically, you keep a steady rhythm and change chords when you reach the word/syllable with a new chord written above it.

Clementine

[Intro]

C (singing note off the 3rd string open C, then strum the C chord with a straight strum before starting the song).

Remember: Keep playing the same chord until you reach the word with a new chord written above it.

C (intro – 1 or 2 bars of 4 counts each)

C

In a cavern, in a canyon

G7

Excavating for a mine

F

C

Dwelt a miner forty-niner

G7

C

And his daughter, Clementine

C

Oh my darling, oh my darling

G7

Oh my darling, Clementine

F

C

You are lost and gone forever

G7

C

Dreadful sorry, Clementine

C

Light she was and like a fairy

G7

And her shoes were number nine

F

C

Herring boxes, without topses

G7

C

Sandals were for Clementine

C

Oh my darling, oh my darling

G7

Oh my darling, Clementine

F

C

You are lost and gone forever

G7

C

Dreadful sorry, Clementine

Keep up the good work! You're doing very well.

How is the strumming coming along? It might be time to extend our right-hand technique a little. Let's delve into *finger-picking* (or *not* – it's entirely up to you - strumming chords is absolutely fine anytime!)

Finger picking -The Claw pick

Instead of strumming a chord, you can also finger pick separate strings in a repeating pattern. Use your right-hand fingers – Thumb –middle- Thumb – index in a 4 by 4 pattern ***T m T i***.

T⁴ **T** = Thumb ⁴= fourth String

m¹ **m** = Middle finger ¹= first string

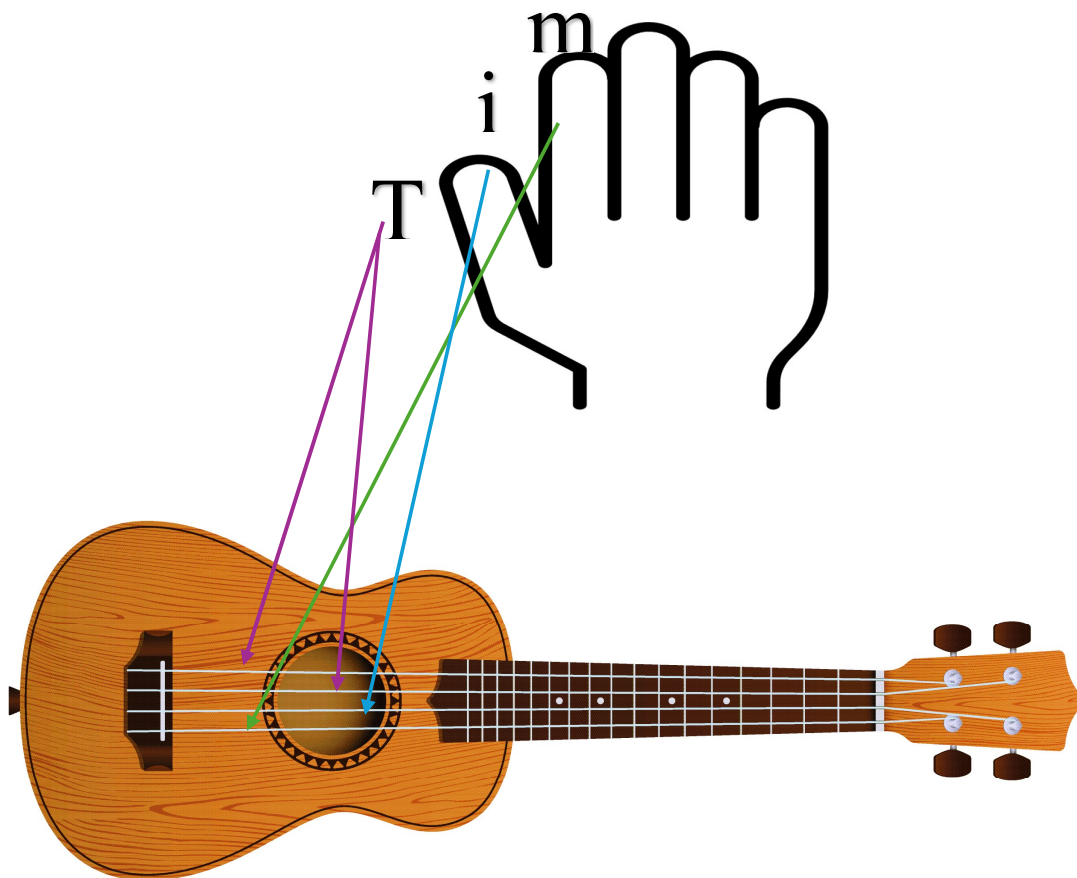
T³ = Thumb, third string

i² = Index finger, second string

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & - 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
Pattern: **T⁴ m¹ T³ i² T⁴ m¹ T³ i² / T⁴ m¹ T³ i² T⁴ m¹ T³ i² /.....repeated throughout a song.**

Note that the thumb is keeping the four count 1 2 3 4 all the time.

Use the tips of your fingers, keep your hand relaxed hovering over the strings like you are loosely holding a tennis ball. Don't like your hand fly away from its hovering position.



This is an *outside-inside* pattern – the thumb and middle fingers pluck the outer strings before the thumb and index fingers pluck the inside strings.

Play around - maybe try an inside-outside pattern (T i T m) or a one-after-each-other pattern (T i m i).

Slow repetition is the best way to learn – it teaches the brain new pathways and will eventually become automatic.

Alberta by Lead Belly

Here is a blues song over 12 bars. Sometimes you might find a chord chart with the chords placed in brackets instead of having been indicated on top of the lyrics. Follow the song in the same way – and in this case, each chord has 4 beats each.

Singing starting note is low G – which an octave lower than the 4th string G.

Alberta

Alberta, Al-[C]-berta, [G7] Where you been so [C] long? [C7] Alberta

Al [F], berta, Where you been so [C] long? [C] Ain't had no

[G7] loving [G7] Since you've been [C] gone [G7]

Alberta, Al-[C]-berta, [G7] Girl your on my [C] mind [C7] Alberta

Al [F], berta, Girl your on my [C] mind [C] Ain't had no

[G7] loving [G7] Such a great long [C] time [G7]

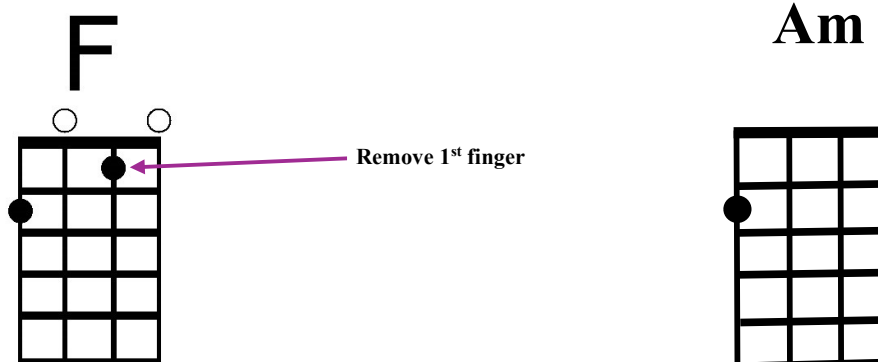
Alberta, Al-[C]-berta, [G7] Where you been so [C] long? [C7] Alberta

Al [F], berta, Where you been so [C] long? [C] Ain't had no

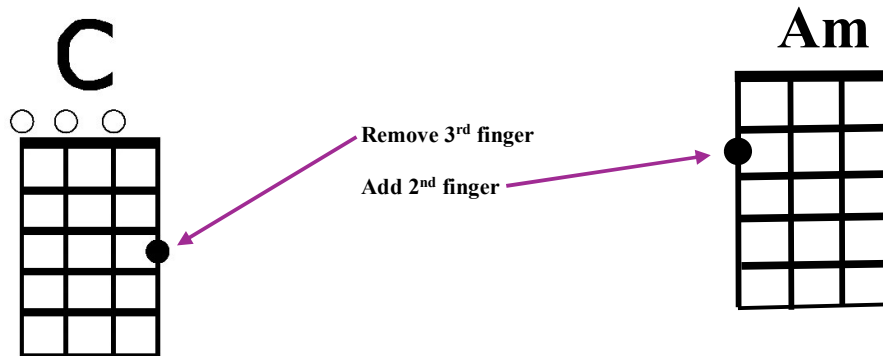
[G7] loving [G7] Since you've been [C] gone [G7] [C6]]

Am chord (A minor)

F to Am



C to Am



Practice changing chords as before.

1/- *

C				Am					F				G7							
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

2/-

C				F				Am				G7								
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

3/-

C				G7				Am				F								
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

*There are many songs following this C Am F G7 chord progression, e.g. *Dream*, *Stand by Me*, *Blue Moon*, *The Tide is High*, *Heart and Soul*. Take a look at this site:- <https://images.app.goo.gl/T9rfcuNfXvYgzi6Z9>

This Little Light of Mine

Harry Dixon/Trad

Gospel style. Singing starting note is taken from the 2nd string *E*.

Chorus

C

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,

F

C

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

Am

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

G7

C

Let it shine, shine, shine, let it shine.

Verse 1

C

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,

F

C

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

Am

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

G7

C

Let it shine, shine, shine, let it shine.

Repeat Chorus

Verse 2

C

All around my house, I'm gonna let it shine,

F

C

All around my house, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

Am

All around my house, I'm gonna let it shine,

C

G7

C

Let it shine, shine, shine, let it shine.

Repeat Chorus

Waltzing Matilda

Trad/Banjo Patterson

Folk song - C chord starting note E (2nd string)

Pattern for verses:- 2 strums per chord 1st and 3rd lines. 4 strums line two and the first half of line four

Pattern for chorus:- 4 strums per chord 1st and 2nd lines, 2 strums 3rd line, 4 strums and the first half of line four

C (2 *strums*) **G7** (2) **Am** (2) **F** (2)

Once a jolly swagman, camped by a billabong

C (4) **G7** (4)

under the shade of a coolabah tree

C (2) **G7** (2) **Am** (2) **F** (2)

And he sang, as he watched, and waited till his billy boiled

C (4) **G7** (2) **C** (2)

you'll come a waltzing Matilda with me

C (4) **F** (4)

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda

C (4) **G7** (4)

You'll come a waltzing Matilda with me

C (2) **G7** (2) **Am** (2) **F** (2)

And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled

C (4) **G7** (2) **C** (2)

you'll come a waltzing Matilda with me

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

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,

C **G7**

Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,

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

And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag,

C **G7** **C**

"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me".

C **F**

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda

C **G7**

You'll come a waltzing Matilda with me

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

And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag,

C **G7** **C**

"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me".

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

Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred,

C **G7**

Down came the troopers, one, two, three,

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

"Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?"

C **G7** **C**

"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me".

C F
Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda
C G7
You'll come a waltzing Matilda with me
C G7 Am F
"Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?",
C G7 C
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me".

C G7 Am F
Up jumped the swagman and sprang into the billabong,
C G7
"You'll never catch me alive", said he,
C G7 Am F
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,
C G7 C
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me".

C F
Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda
C G7
You'll come a waltzing Matilda with me
C G7 Am F
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,
C G7 C
"You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me."

Oh When The Saints Go Marching In

Early jazz style

C **C**
O when the saints go marchin' in,
G7
O when the saints go marchin' in,
C **F**
O Lord, I want to be in that number
C **G7** **C**
When the saints go marchin' in.

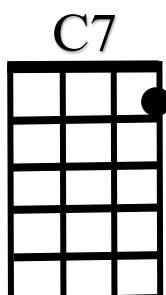
C **C**
O when the sun refuse to shine,
G7
O when the sun refuse to shine,
C **F**
O Lord, I want to be in that number
C **G7** **C**
When the sun refuse to shine.

C **C**
O when the moon goes down in blood,
G7
O when the moon goes down in blood,
C **F**
O Lord, I want to be in that number
C **G7** **C**
When the moon goes down in blood.

Repeat Verse 1

New chord C7

(C major chord with a flattened 7th added (Bb))



1/-

C				C7				F				G7								
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

2/-

C7				F				C7				F								
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	

3/-

C7				F				C7				F								
1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	1	2	3	4	-	Repeat
□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□		

Strumming Off the Beat (Swing) with C7 and F

Down strums – relax the hand after each strum to allow some breathing space between chords

Shuffle strums (**DU**)

Add *up* strums so the rhythm shuffles rather than being an even down up strum.

More like  Rather than an even  but with a triplet feel: -  3

Allow the strums to breathe by releasing the hand from a continuous pressure after each strum

Try getting to the 1st chord in each bar of 4 early (syncopation)

Here is an excellent *youtube* video guide from Christopher Davis-Shannon:-

<https://youtu.be/DSwbCl357JU?si=k3xTHNFlgfowqrN9>

This Train

Woody Guthrie

Gospel

C

This train is bound for Glory, this train.

C

G7

This train is bound for Glory, this train.

C

C7

This train is bound for Glory,

F

G7

Reelin' n' a wheelin' n' a rocking n' a rollin'

C

G7

C

This train is bound for Glory, this train.

2/ This train don't carry no gamblers, this train.

This train don't carry no gamblers, this train.

This train don't carry no gamblers,

Reelin' n' a wheelin' n' a rocking n' a rollin'

This train is bound for Glory, this train.

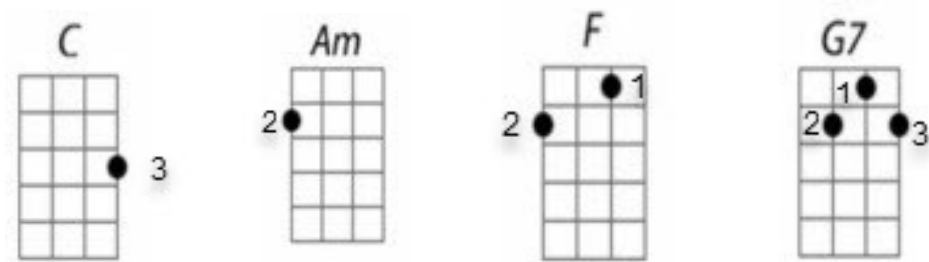
3/ Jokers

4/ Cheaters

5/ Repeat 1

Play this song straight or use shuffle strum (like a train travelling along).

Basic strum styles



NOTE: -The chord Dm7 can be substituted for F – it is exactly the same fingering!

DOWN STRUM 4/4 (D – D – D – D –)

C		Am		F (Dm7)		G7	
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D

THUMB PICK 4th String (T₄) DOWN STRUM 4/4 (T₄ – D – T₄ – D –)

C		Am		F (Dm7)		G7	
T ₄	D	T ₄	D	T ₄	D	T ₄	D

DOWN UP STRUM 4/4 / (D U D U D U D U)

C		Am		F (Dm7)		G7	
D	U	D	U	D	U	D	U

COUNTRY STRUM 4/4 (T₄ – D U T₄ – D U)

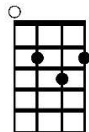
C		Am		F (Dm7)		G7	
T ₄	D U	T ₄	D U	T ₄	D U	T ₄	D U

Chord Chart

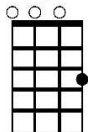


Beginner Ukulele Chords

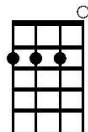
G



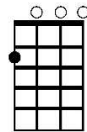
C



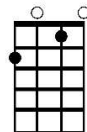
D



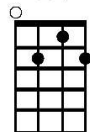
A_m



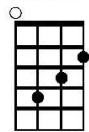
F



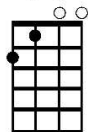
G₇



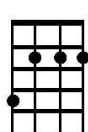
E_m



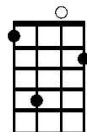
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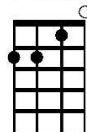
B_m



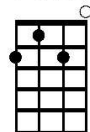
E



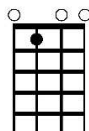
D_m



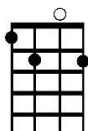
F_{#m}



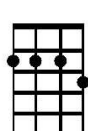
A₇



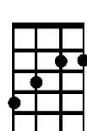
E₇



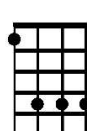
D₇



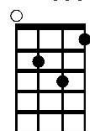
B



C_{#m}



G_m



Acknowledgements

Website references:

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² Open University *OpenLearn* Website 2025 (<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/discovering-music-the-blues/content-section-4#:~:text=Alyn%20Shipton%2C%20a%20scholar%20of,of%20spiritual%20and%20gospel%20music%27>).

³ Cambridge University Website 2025
(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/blues>)

⁴ NICE 2025. Website (<https://www.nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/social-care/quick-guides/promoting-positive-mental-wellbeing-for-older-people#:~:text=A%20quick%20guide%20for%20registered,sense%20of%20belonging%20and%20support.>)

⁵ Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A., Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. and Jennifer Shubin, 2025). HelpGuide.Org. (<https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/wellbeing/benefits-of-play-for-adults>)

⁶ Bigger, Better Brains: Why repetition is important (website 2025):
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⁷ Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/art/chord-music>

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GetLyrics.com,
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The Orchard Enterprises: Eric Clapton, Alberta (Acoustic Live).
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