

Ukulele Lessons

by Curt Sheller

Navigating the C Major Scale

The **C Major Scale** is typically the first *Full Diatonic* major scale that most players learn. It's the first scale to learn when starting to explore music theory - *the principles of music*.



C **D** **E** **F** **G** **A** **B** **C'**
Scale Degrees/Intervals: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8'

With the ukulele's ability to play notes in alternate locations along the fingerboard, this scale can be played in different positions.

Every Finger Every String

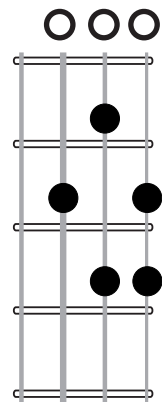
A great way to explore the fingerboard is to start on every note of a scale and play all available notes in that position (*vertical*) or along the strings (*horizontal*). Ultimately you should be able to play any note using any finger.

We'll begin our exploration starting on each note of the C Major scale along string three, playing all available notes in a four or five fret span.

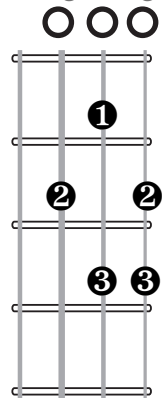
Why Not String Four?

There are two common C tunings (G C E A) on ukulele. One with a low string four and one with a high string four. Both have the same tuning for strings three, two, and one. Once you have thoroughly explored starting on string three, you'll have no problem incorporating string four and expanding your scale positions to include the available notes from the scale on string four.

Shape



Fingering



for more lessons visit

www.curtsheller.com • www.learningukulele.com

Finger 1, String ③

⊙ Indicates the Root or **C**, the Letter Name of the scale.

Basic

(2) Finger 1, String 3, Fret (2)
D to D`

Slide

(4) Finger 1, String 3, Fret (4)
E to F`

Basic

(5) Finger 1, String 3, Fret (5)
F to F`

Basic

(7) Finger 1, String 3, Fret (7)
G to G`

* Notice these two positions and fingering solutions are the same. It's all about reusing what we already know.

Practice Tips

- Say the letter names of the notes as you play the scale. Singing the names also helps train the fingers to follow the ear.
- Know what finger plays what interval.
- Explore ALL seven positions.
- Memorize each position.

Note Names

(2) **D B G C E F A D**

Scale Intervals

(2) **2 7 5 1 3 4 6 2**

Above example showing D to D` the note names and scale intervals starting on string ③, frets (2)

for more lessons visit

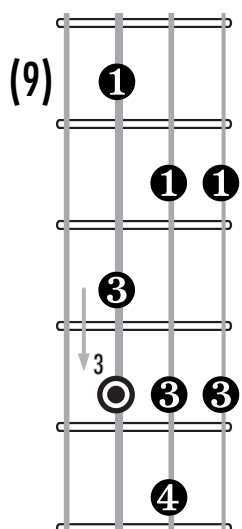
www.curtsheller.com • www.learningukulele.com



Finger 1, String 3 ③

⊙ Indicates the Root or **C**, the Letter Name of the scale.

Slide

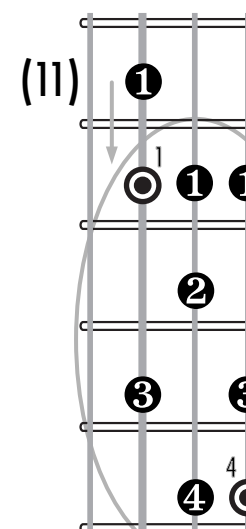


(9)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (9)

A to A`

Slide

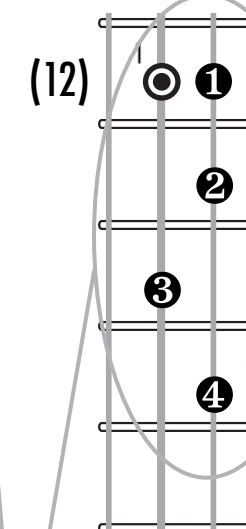


(11)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (11)

B to C`

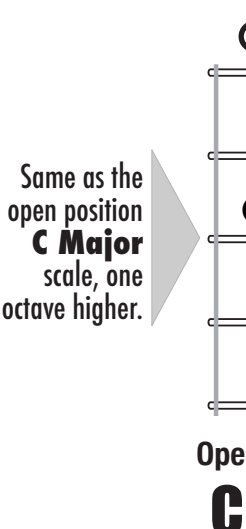
Basic



(12)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (12)

C to C`



Open Position
C to C`

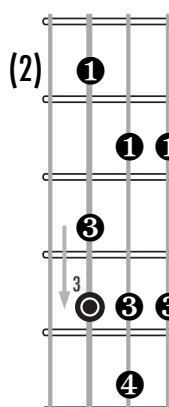
Same as the open position **C Major** scale, one octave higher.

* Notice these two positions and fingering solutions are the same. It's all about reusing what we already know.

Observations

The higher positions up the neck starting at frets (9), (11), and (12) might not be available on your particular sized ukulele. Transpose to either G Major (G A B C D E F# G') or **F major (F G A Bb C D E F')**.

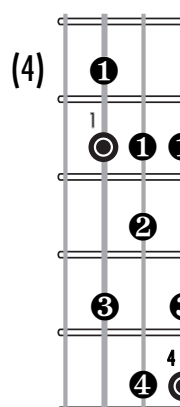
Here are the starting frets for these three position for F major (*shown to the right*). The shapes, intervals, and sound are the same only the scale note names are different.



(2)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (2)

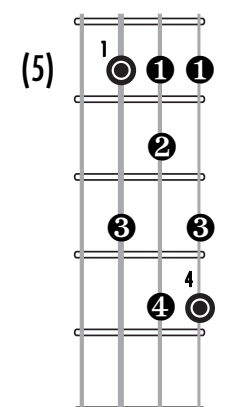
D to D`



(4)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (4)

E to F`



(5)

Finger 1, String 3,
Fret (5)

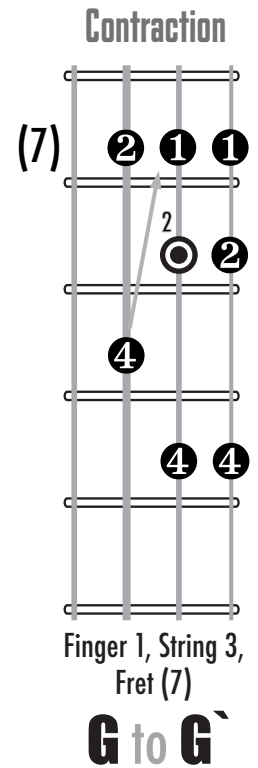
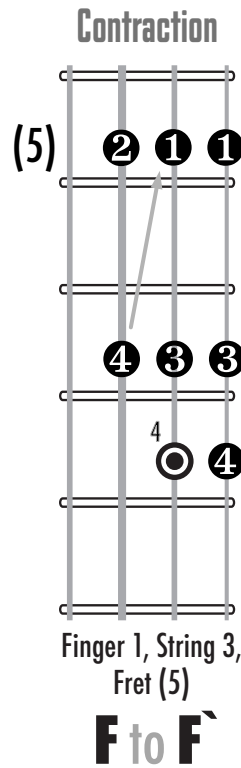
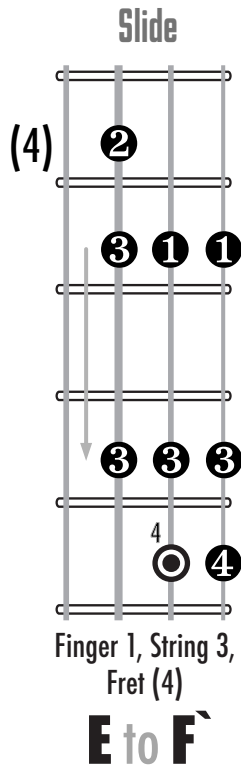
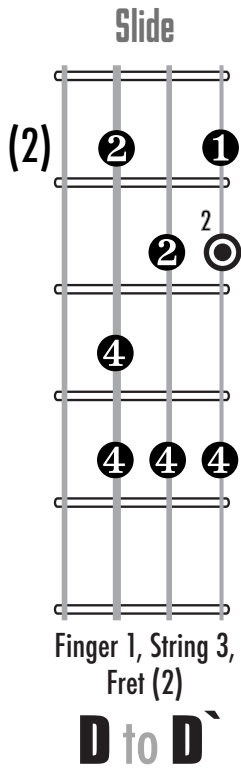
F to F`

for more lessons visit

www.curtsheller.com • www.learningukulele.com

Finger 2 String ③

⊙ Indicates the Root or C, the Letter Name of the scale.



Fingering solutions for 4 of the 7 positions. Explore the remaining 3 positions starting on finger two.

Observations

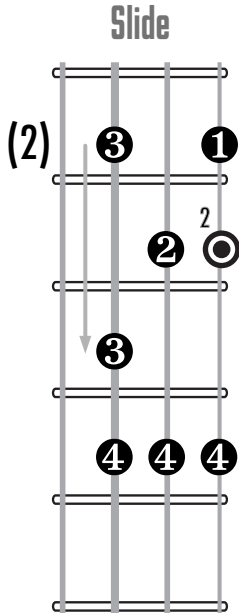
All the principles used for these solutions are from my book **The Six Secrets of Fingering for Ukulele**. The application of these fingering principles create multiple pathways through any given melodic passage. Whether it's a written melody, improvised line, scale or arpeggio run, each fingering produces a different sound.

The first two solutions used the *slide* fingering principle. The last two used the *contraction* fingering principle. These are just a few of the possible fingering solutions.

Finger 3 String ③

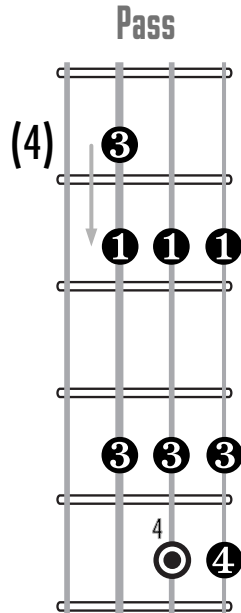
⊙ Indicates the Root or **C**, the Letter Name of the scale.

Slide



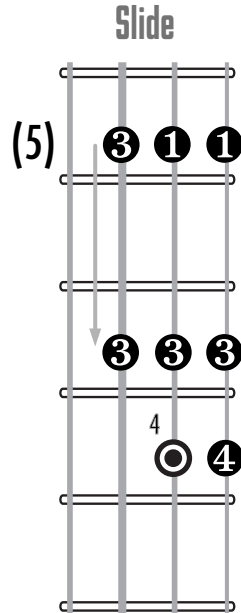
(2) Finger 1, String 3, fret (2)
D to D`

Pass



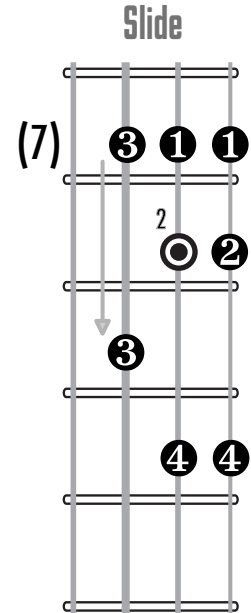
(4) Finger 1, String 3, fret (4)
E to F`

Slide



(5) Finger 1, String 3, fret (5)
F to F`

Slide



(7) Finger 1, String 3, fret (7)
G to G`

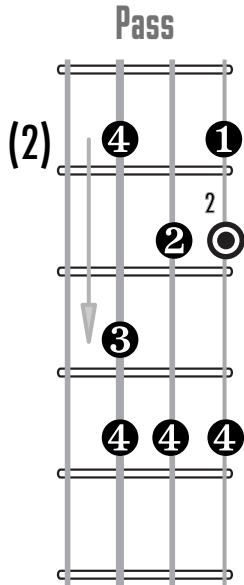
Fingering solutions for 4 of the 7 positions. Explore the remaining 3 positions starting on finger two.

Observations

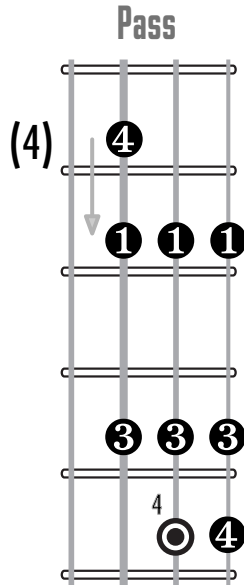
This page used the *slide* and *pass* fingering principles. These are just a few of the possible fingering solutions.

Finger 4 String ③

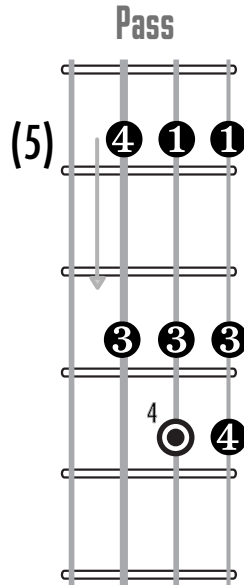
⊙ Indicates the Root or C, the Letter Name of the scale.



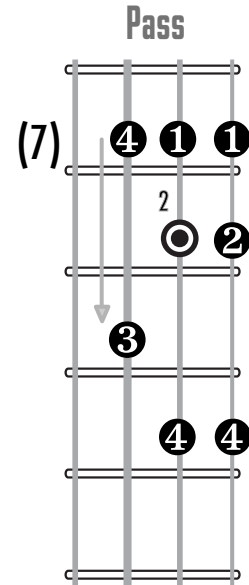
Finger 1, String 3,
fret (2)
D to D`



Finger 1, String 3,
fret (4)
E to F`



Finger 1, String 3,
fret (5)
F to F`



Finger 1, String 3,
fret (7)
G to G`

Fingering solutions for 4 of the 7 positions. Explore the remaining 3 positions starting on finger three.

Observations

This page used the *Pass* fingering principle to get into the *Basic* fingering position.

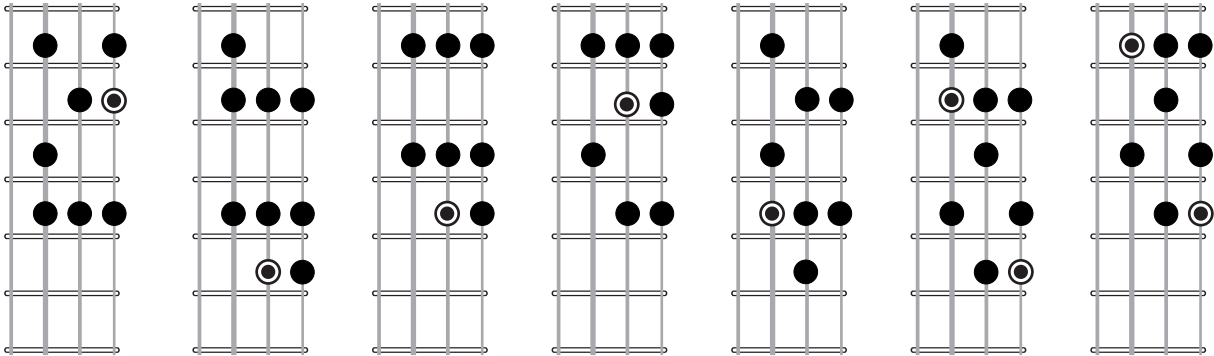
Unless there is an overwhelming musical reason the goal is to get into the *basic* position where basic is the fingering principle that is used.

Explore the remaining 3 positions starting on finger four. These are just a few of the possible fingering solutions.

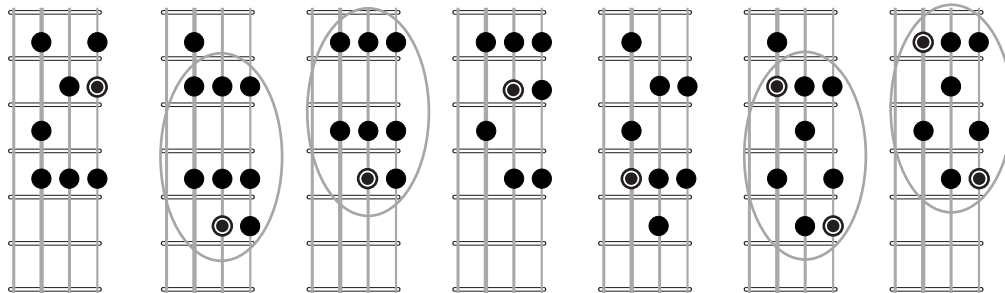
Summary

⊙ Indicates the Root or **C**, the Letter Name of the scale.

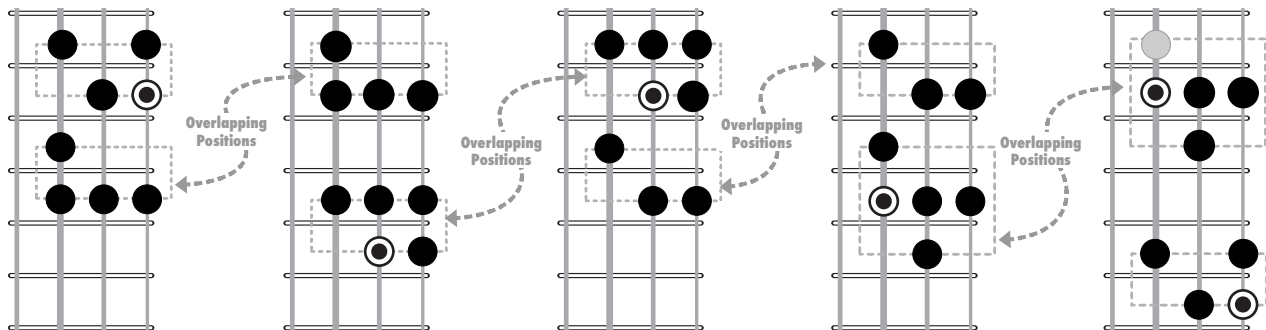
Here are the seven (7) positions.



Two of the seven positions can be thought of as the same position. Turns out there is only one note out of the *basic 4 fret span* position that needs to be addressed.



Five Basic Positions



Notice that each position overlaps with the next higher and previous lower position.

Horizontal vs. Vertical

⊙ Indicates the Root or **C**, the Letter Name of the scale.

The seven positions / five shapes all have been *vertical* fingering solutions where we stayed in the same four / five fret span and navigated across *vs.* along the strings.

You can also navigate the pathways horizontally along the strings to connect adjacent and non-adjacent positions. Here are a few fingering solutions using *Pass*, notated using TAB.

Finger: 1 3 4 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4

T 7 8 10

A 7 8 10

B 2 4 5 7 9

* This solution uses a *Pass* fingering solution.

Finger: 1 3 4 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4

T 7 8 10

A 3 5 7 8 10

B 2 4 5

* This solution uses a *Pass* fingering solution.

Finger: 1 3 4 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4

T 2 3 5 7 8 10

A 3 5

B 2 4 5

* This solution uses a *Pass* fingering solution.

for more lessons visit

www.curtsheller.com • www.learningukulele.com