

Self-Examination Tool for 'Ukulele Proficiency

Uncle Rod Higuchi

Uncle Rod's "Self-Examination Test for Ukulele Proficiency"

This **SET-UP** is just for fun. ☺

Still consider yourself a '**Beginner**'?

Play through the following Chord Sheet, left to right, top to bottom, 4 times.

FIRST time - 4 strums per chord SECOND time - 3 strums per chord

THIRD time - 2 strums per chord FOURTH time - 1 strum per chord... end with A [not G7].

Your GOAL should be to play through this Chord Sheet at 1-2 strums per second.

Try NOT to 'break your stride' or look at your chord-forming fingers.

If you can play through the test without breaking your stride/tempo, especially at 1-2 strums per second, you should definitely NOT label yourself a 'Beginner'.

Hand someone a properly-tuned ukulele and ask them to play through the chord sheet. If they can do it at an even tempo without interruption, you wouldn't call them a 'Beginner', would you?

Test:

C Am F G7 C F C A7

D Bm G A7 D G D C7

F Dm Bb C7 F Bb F D7

G Em C D7 G C G E7

A F#m D E7 A D A (G7)

(return to top & reduce # of strums by 1); **last time** (1 or 2 strums) end with **A**, [not (G7)]

I'm sharing this 'test' for two reasons:

1 - to encourage ukulele players who may still think that they haven't been making any progress in their attempt to learn to play the ukulele, and...

2 - to provide beginners/newbies with something to practice, accomplish, and master.

I want to challenge some of you who aren't giving yourself enough credit for the progress you've already made in your ukulele playing. If you can play through the 'test' at a moderate pace at 2 strums per chord, you should promote yourself to 'intermediate' at least. You've earned it. ☺

Take your time with regard to the tempo. It's better to be able to get through the test slowly rather than put too much pressure on yourself by trying to rush through it. Like Francis Albert (Sinatra) said, "Nice and easy does it every time."

If you want more practice sheets/'tests', with more/different chords, please click on my **Ukulele Boot Camp** link in my signature.

By the way, there is no such thing as 'Cheating' when it comes to playing the ukulele. By that I mean, "whatever works for you, is a valid way to play the uke". The locals have a beautiful saying, "if can, can. If no can, no can"... so try another way that works for you.

The bottom line is what it **sounds** like. Beautiful (read proper or correct) technique that sounds bad is not good ukulele playing. 'Poor' technique that sounds beautiful... and who cares?

Remember the FIRST 'rule' of playing the ukulele – **'It must be fun!'**

If you are having difficulty, don't be too hard on yourself. Please be assured that eventually you'll experience that "Ah-Ha" moment when it all comes together. And that moment is right around the corner, esp if you're practicing regularly, if not daily.

Think about this, if we had handed you an 'ukulele a few months ago - What would you have done with it? But **NOW**, hey, you can actually PLAY it. That's real progress!

'Beginner', 'Intermediate', even 'Advanced' are NOT clear-cut 'levels'. We throw them about and may use them to try to categorize ourselves or even others. But, like 'Beauty', it's really in the eye (or in this case - ear?) of the beholder/be-hearer!

Remember, this **'SET-UP'** is just for fun... but with a little bit of challenge to make it more interesting. If you're having fun with it... Great! If not, pass.

Congratulations (in advance) to any and all of you who are able to work through the "SET UP"!

In lieu of a 'Certificate of Achievement', go out and feed your UAS (Ukulele Acquisition Syndrome) but only if you can afford to do so... Oh oh, did I just become an enabler?

NOTE: **You** can create your own 'test' using any of the **keys** (first chord in each line). What you'll need to do is to find the 'x7th' chord (based on the 5th note of the Major scale of the key you want to modulate/transition to). That is, if you're playing in any key other than the key of C and you want to modulate to the key of C, find the **5th note of the Major scale for the key of C** (c-d-

e-f-g) which is a 'G' and make it a '7th' chord (**G7**). This G7 will naturally lead to chords in the key of C.

Again, if you're in a different key (from the key of C) and want to form a more natural transition/modulation to the key of C, then use a G7, and it will help you move right into the key of C. Clear as mud?

You will want to play a G7 before going to the key of C.
In the same way, ... C7 will lead in to the key of F
E7 will lead in to the key of A
A7 will lead in to the key of D
D7 will lead in to the key of G

If you follow these guidelines you can mix up the order of keys, just remember the 'x7th' chord (formed by using the 5th note of the next key's Major scale) that leads most naturally to the chords of the next key.

Please encourage your ukulele-playing friends to give this **Self-Examination Test** a try. And then direct them to the **Ukulele Boot Camp** for a fuller, and more comprehensive, challenge. (**Boot Camp** and **Boot Camp Songbook** links are below my signature)

NOTE on **Uncle Rod's Ukulele Boot Camp**:

Like Military 'Boot Camp' it can seem like hard work and drudgery at times (maybe all the time), but its design is to 'get you into shape' for things to come.

Follow up with the **Boot Camp Songbook** to see the 'system' as it is applied to learning new songs. If you want to use the 'system' or 'method' to help you learn a song, just create your own 'Practice Sheets' using the chords of the song you want to learn and you'll be playing your favorite songs in no time!

Keep uke'in', ☺

Uncle Rod Higuchi

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MP3s: <http://www.mediafire.com/?50db7nls4o6m6>

Ukulele Boot Camp, Boot Camp Songbook & More:
<http://www.mediafire.com/?rvr286vaqavab>

Holiday Songbook:
<http://www.mediafire.com/?0p02c7ttpqe2g>