

Really Helpful Stuff For Newer Ukulele Players

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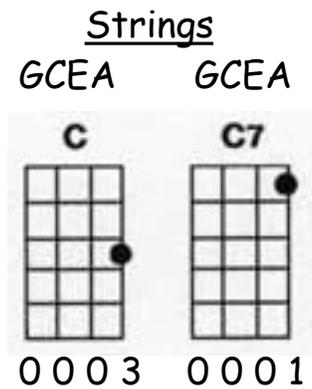
What do the 4 digit numbers mean for ukulele chords?

From <http://www.gotaukulele.com/2011/01/beginner-tips-what-do-4-digit-numbers.html>

This is just a simple form of notation for a ukulele chord without drawing a ukulele chord box and showing with a drawing where the fingers go.

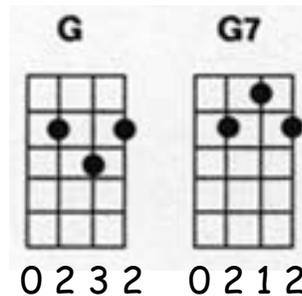
It's really very simple and worth understanding as you won't always see the chord boxes when finding songs to play

Look at the first chord to the right in *GCEA*, which is the standard tuning for soprano, concert and tenor ukuleles. To play that chord, the chord box is showing you the string nearest your face on the far left, and the string nearest the floor on the far right. We have a black dot on the A string (the one nearest the floor) at the third fret position. This is the only note that is fretted, and the rest are played open. If you strum this you get a C. Now, without a chord box, how do we express that? Well, the notation in 4 digits is 0003. A zero means the string is played open, and of course the 3 means you hold that bottom string at the third fret.



The second chord is the *C7* chord. We have a spot on the A string (the one nearest the floor) at the first fret position. This is the only note that is fretted, and the rest are played open. If you strum this you get a *C7*. It is described as 0001.

Here are *G* and *G7*.



Have a look at some others -

A = 2100	A7 = 0100	Am = 2000
B = 4322	B7 = 2322	Bm = 4222
C = 0003	C7 = 0001	Cm = 0333
D = 2220	D7 = 2020 (or 2223)	Dm = 2210
E = 4441	E7 = 1202	Em = 0432
F = 2010	F7 = 2310	Fm = 1013
G = 0232	G7 = 0212	Gm = 0231

Why Numbers Instead of Letters for Chords?

A common question at jams is, "what is this whole 1, 4, 5 thing all about, and why do I want to know it?" I had a long conversation about 1, 4, 5 with local guitar instructor Adam Granger. Adam was an original member of the Prairie Home Companion band, and he teaches at camps and workshops from coast to coast.

Adam said that the understanding the concept of 1, 4, 5 is core to being a better musician. He commented that one reason professional musicians do not describe a chord progression using letters, like g, c, or d because each ends with the "e" sound. In a noisy environment, it is virtually impossible to tell the difference between letters. This happened to one jammer yesterday evening. He asked if I said "d" or "g." Representing chords with numbers does away with the "e" sound-alike problem. The use of numbers for chords is called the Nashville Numbering System.

More important, no matter what key a song is played in, numbers tell musicians what chord to play. Most folk, country, bluegrass, and roots music songs use some combination of the 1, 4, 5 chords. **See the chart below.** If the key is C, the 1 is C, the 4 is F, and the 5 is G. Can't sing in C, but you can in G? Just switch the key to G. So, G becomes the 1, C becomes the 4, and D becomes the 5. Whether the key is c, g, d or whatever, 1, 4, 5 clearly tells what chords to play.

UKULELE MAJOR CHORDS

↓ For Bb. move the B chord 1 fret towards the nut ↑

1 = Key = Root	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
A	-----	-----	D	E	-----	-----	-----
G	-----	-----	C	D	-----	-----	-----
E	-----	-----	A	B	-----	-----	-----
D	-----	-----	G	A	-----	-----	-----
F	-----	-----	Bb*	C	-----	-----	-----

In most bluegrass & folk songs, you can play a 7th for a 5 chord. For example: G7 for G, D7 for D, A7 for A, etc.