

# USING PICKS

Ukulele Tuesdays – Evergreen Library

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# PLAYING MUSIC IS MORE THAN JUST MEMORIZING A BUNCH OF CHORDS ON YOUR INSTRUMENT.

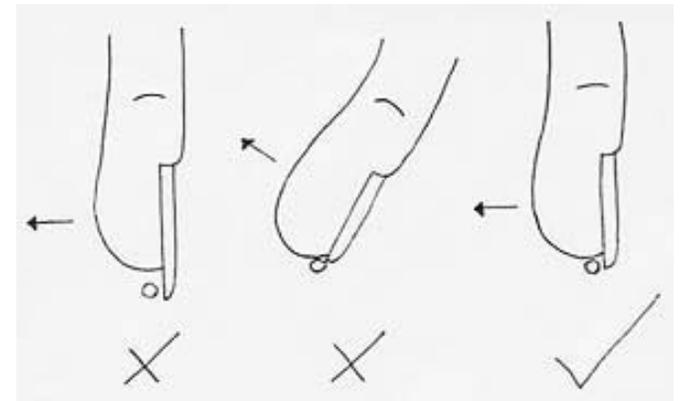
That's difficult. And takes a long time.

# WHY USE PICKS?

- Allow you to play faster
- Allow you to pluck individual strings easily
- Produces different types of sounds
  - Produces a louder volume
  - Sharper tones (brighter or pointier)
- Personal preference
- Flatpicking vs. Fingerstyle
  - Flatpicking uses a *plectrum* (more commonly known as a pick)
  - Fingerstyle uses the fingers of your right hand to pluck the strings (with or without fingerpicks)

# FINGERNAILS

- The “all natural” way
- Allows you to pluck individual strings (fingerstyle playing)
- Requires no additional equipment
- Requires strong nails at an appropriate length
- Requires a lot of maintenance to keep nails in shape (i.e. manicures)



# GUITAR PICK

- Called a **plectrum** and is a small flat tool used to pluck or strum a stringed instrument
- Made from plastic (nylon, Delrin, celluloid), rubber, felt, tortoiseshell, wood, metal, glass, or stone
- Usually shaped like an equilateral triangle, but other shapes exist
- Very inexpensive and you can make your own



# PICK TYPES FOR UKULELE

- **Plastic**
  - Is the classic material and are very easy to find
  - Produces a clear, bright, vintage sound
- **Felt**
  - Produces quite and very soft tones (depending on stiffness)
  - Will wear out quickly
  - Can leave felt dust on your instrument
- **Rubber**
  - A nice compromise between plastic and felt
  - Produces louder and softer tones (depending on stiffness)
  - Last longer than felt

# USING A GUITAR PICK

- Often used for strumming, but can also be used for picking individual strings
- Holding it
  - Relax your hand and make a loose fist with your thumb on the outside of your index finger
  - Slide the pick between the two
  - The pick should be held between the center of your thumb and the last knuckle of your index finger
  - You want about  $\frac{1}{2}$  " of the pick protruding (more for strumming, less for picking)
  - Hold it firm enough to not drop it as you strum, but loose enough for it to rotate slightly as it plucks the strings



# USING A GUITAR PICK (CON'T)

- **Strumming**
  - Strum over sound hole
  - Don't let your hand rest on the instrument
  - Movement should come from the wrist (not arm)
  - Rotate wrist like you are screwing in a lightbulb
  - Connect with the strings on the down-stroke and/or up-stroke
    - This is how you make strum patterns
  - Strumming harder or easier produces different volumes and tones



# FINGERPICKS

- A type of plectrum used most commonly for playing bluegrass style banjo music
- Usually made of metal or plastic
- Two types
  - Fit on the tips of several Fingers
  - Fit on the Thumb
- Must be shaped or molded to fit your fingers which can be challenging
- Not expensive, but more so than guitar picks



# USING FINGERPICKS

- Typically used on your pointer and middle fingers and thumb
- Allows you to play 3 strings at once
- Play strings individually (fingerstyle playing)
  - There are also standard *roll patterns* that can be used
- Because a ukulele usually don't have pick guard, metal fingerpicks can damage the instrument if you aren't careful when playing



# BUTTERFLY FINGERPICKS

- A different take on standard fingerpicks
- Made of metal wire
- Must be shaped slightly to fit your fingers
- Typically used on pointer, middle, and ring fingers and thumb
  
- Allows you to play like you would with standard fingerpicks
- Produces a softer tone than a standard fingerpick
- Acts more like your fingernails than standard fingerpicks





# QUESTIONS?

