

The Top #7 'Ukulele Tips for Women

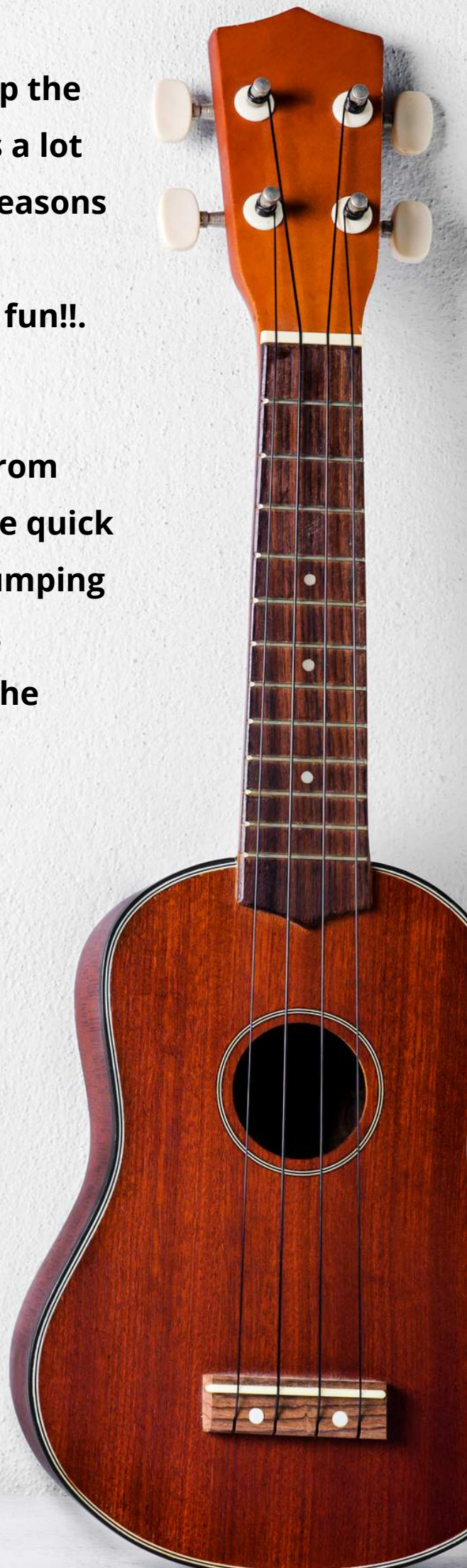


So you are thinking about taking up the 'ukulele? This little instrument has a lot going for it... and there are many reasons why it is a great choice. It's small, portable, inexpensive and loads of fun!!.

But before I start, let's look at the pronunciation! The 'ukulele hails from Hawaii, and as any Hawaiian will be quick to let you know, 'ukulele means 'jumping fleas', as that is what the islanders thought the fingers jumping over the fretboard looked like!

It is pronounced 'OO-koo-LEH-leh', and written with a special apostrophe called the Okina: 'ukulele. For this reason, I will say 'an (oo)kulele' and spell it with the okina.

I'll let you decide if you want to use the traditional pronunciation and spelling, or the anglicised 'YOU-ka-LAY-lee'. It's personal preference.



Tip #1

Get Yourself an 'Ukulele!

You cannot learn to play without an instrument. You don't need to spend much, that's the beauty of the 'ukulele. For under \$100 you can have something that is absolutely fine to learn with (including a tuner, which you will need), and for under \$200 you can purchase a more reputable brand that is even nicer!

I recommend avoiding the very cheap colour-painted 'ukuleles. They are fine for little kids to bash in whichever way they see fit, however as an instrument they are difficult to tune and sound, quite frankly, horrible. Spend just a little more, you will be thankful you did.

And if you're not ready to buy, see if you can borrow one from a friend, or put a notice up in your town, there are many ukuleles packed away waiting for someone to save them!



Tip #2

Choose a Good Chair

It is really important to have a good, sturdy chair in which you can sit upright.

This will not only help you look after your body, sitting upright also facilitates holding and playing the 'ukulele the right way.

Couches may be comfy, but slouching is not recommended!

Avoid chairs with wheels - you don't want to be sliding across the floor! Also choose a chair without armrests - they will get in your way.

Tip #3

Get Started!

Once you have an 'ukulele, the only way to learn is to take it out of the box or case and play! All it will do on the shelf is gather dust, and that's a sure-fire way for it to one day end up discarded in a spring clean.



Tip #4

Open Space for the 'Ukulele

We've all had the greatest of intentions to learn something new, been inspired, maybe even have taken the first steps.... and then it all falls away. Life gets in the way. Or maybe it's just that we get in our own way.... So let's give a little thought on how we can best set ourselves up for success.

The trick to making the 'ukulele a part of our lives is to make it part of our lives!! Seriously... we need to open and mark in the time and then follow through by honouring our commitment.

Are you crazy busy? Our lives are filled with family and work responsibilities, before we even start to get a look in to some 'me time'. As women, we tend to forget about ourselves while we take care of everyone else around us.

So let's prioritise ourselves and our learning! All we need to get started is 10 minutes most days. Think of it like getting dressed... or cleaning your teeth. Something you do everyday.

Now let's find those 10 min! Get creative! For starters, you could:

- Get up 15min earlier
- Reduce social media time
- Turn off your phone a little earlier at night
- Turn down your TV during the ads...



Tip #5 Practise the Right Way!!

The latest brain science on how we best learn is in: *regular, deliberate practice* (as opposed to random playing) for *short periods* is far better than fewer, longer sessions. I recommend to start with 10 minutes most days of the week.

Check in regularly with your body. It is so easy to tense up when learning a new skill... if you feel that happening, stop, shake out, stretch, breathe in and out and start again, consciously focusing on relaxing as much as possible.

GO SLOW!!! Your brain doesn't distinguish between right or wrong, it simply learns what you are repeating. By playing slowly with focus, you have time to process everything.

Once you get it, you can then gradually speed up. Believe me, you'll get there better and faster by going slow!

Break down harder tasks. Every skill can be broken down into its simplest parts. This gives our brains the opportunity to understand each individual component, and how it is all put together.



Tip #6

Get a Good Teacher

A good teacher can help you with the learning steps you need and also to set appropriate, small practice goals.



Now while fellow ukulele players may show you a few things, as can YouTube videos, this cannot replace lessons with a well-thought out, step-by-step approach. Not only does this make learning easier and more effective, it also helps prevent bad habits in the all-important beginner stage. Bad habits are much harder to unlearn than learning the right technique first up.

Another major benefit of having a teacher is that it helps to keep you accountable. You want value for your investment. And you want to learn the new skills covered each week so you can progress to the next lesson.



Luckily, finding an 'ukulele teacher these days is not too hard. Even if there isn't anyone in your local area, the ease of online courses is accessible to everyone. Either way, find someone you can trust, someone who truly wants you to succeed, and has all of the skills to help you make a fantastic start.

Tip #7 The Secret Ingredient

Unlike Kung Fu Panda, there *is* a secret ingredient... in fact there are two!!

Firstly remember that music comes from the heart, so *always play from the heart*, even if you are playing a single note.... this is how musicians move us through all sorts of emotions.... they play from their hearts, and in doing connect us to the music though our hearts.

You don't need to be a trained musician to play from the heart. Take a moment to centre before playing, take a deep breath and relax into your heart space.

Then play from there. And we all know love (secret ingredient #1) is *always* the secret ingredient, regardless of what we are doing, don't we?

The next thing is to not be too serious... The 'ukulele is an instrument of joy. You can't help but smile when you hear its sweet tunes. So enjoy your learning, with your challenges and achievements, and **HAVE FUN** (secret ingredient #2).

Believe me, the more you learn, the more fun you will have! And you'll most likely discover it's a great way to relax and forget the daily grind as well.

I wish you all the best with your 'ukulele journey!

About Me...



Hi! I'm Aiyana, music artist, teacher and coach,

I am a multi-instrumentalist and performer. Music has been a big part of most of my life. I have been teaching adults and children 'ukulele for years in groups and privately, with many Women's Ukulele Groups. It is such an honour to open the world of music to my students, and I love the support and friendship that grows within the women-only groups.

I have a 1st Class Honours university degree in Education, and am fascinated by how we learn, as well as the positive impact it has on our brains. I understand the importance of breaking down new or difficult tasks into bite-sized, progressive steps, and how to maximise learning and skill acquisition. I carefully plan my courses and lessons to facilitate learning and guarantee the best results.

I also use a unique approach to teach strumming and rhythm, which has fantastic results with both adults and children.

With the challenges of 2020, I realised the time had come to take my groundbreaking program to a much larger community.... and so AIYANA 'Ukulele (Online) was born. I have adapted my Beginner 'ukulele program for an online approach: The Complete 'Ukulele Startup Course for Women'.

As my in-person group classes evolved naturally with women, I decided to maintain this trend with my online programs. I am passionate about supporting women to be empowered in their learning and playing.

I have a FaceBook group for the women in my courses so they can continue to support each other. I also keep in touch with my students via this group, and hold monthly live sessions so everyone can have their questions answered.

It is an exciting next step for me, as I can share my passion and connect many more women to the joy of music. I truly hope you, too, can embark on a wonderful 'ukulele journey.

