

7 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before I Started Learning to Play the Ukulele

When I started my Ukulele learning journey I had some ideas about how that journey would unfold. However, looking back, I wish that somebody would have told me a few things... It would have made my experience feel much less frustrating. For example, I wish that someone would have told me:

#1 – You will succeed!

Especially when we are just starting out, it can take a bit of time until we finally get confident playing the Ukulele, switching between chords or using different strumming patterns effortlessly... In these moments I wish I had someone next to me, confidently telling me that I will get through it. Because it is true, we can succeed, we just have to keep practicing and sooner or later, we can play the Uke with ease!

#2 – You may take longer than you expected

Even though many experts will tell you that learning to play the Uke is easier than a guitar, you can still take longer to learn than you had hoped for. So we need to keep our expectations in check.

#3 – You must force yourself to practice slowly

Sometimes, when I got a strumming pattern right (after slowly practicing it many times) I would get really excited and started playing around like a drunk Ukulele player, very quickly. Inevitably, I would then make mistakes, which was frustrating. Now I force myself to practice slowly (most of the time).

#4 – You will become frustrated at times

When I began playing the Uke I would sometimes get frustrated and stressed out, when I didn't get something right on the first or second try. As soon as we have some skills under our belt, however, the practice sessions actually become very relaxed!

#5 – You will have exciting bursts of learning between practice sessions

One of the things that amazed me the most throughout this experience has been realizing that my brain is actually working to help me learn the Uke not just during my practice sessions but also between them! I have found that sometimes (even after a disappointing session), when I pick up the Uke several days later, my fingers still remember what I learned previously and they actually perform way better than before!

#6 – Try not to compare yourself with other Uke players

The Internet allows us to easily watch thousands of videos of amazing Uke players, some of which feature young children. This is great for motivation – “Wow, the Uke is so easy that even a child can play it, so I'll surely become a Rockstar player in no time!” but this can also backfire – “Hmm, I've been playing for months and this 5-year-old still plays way better than me... I should probably quit”. This comparison tendency is useless – each person has their own rhythm and their own strengths!

#7 – Set specific tasks & goals to motivate yourself

When I first started out I began practicing mindlessly, trying out chords and strumming patterns with no particular plan to guide me. I now have set goals that I want to achieve in each practice session, such as playing a particular strumming pattern or changing between all the chords I know for at least 20 times. This has helped me to keep playing, even when I'm having a hard time doing the movements.

Learning to play the Ukulele has been an interesting journey, and while it hasn't been all smooth sailing, I am very happy with the way things are going. I hope that after reading this you will feel more excited and prepared to embark on this exciting journey as well!