

Do I need a special set of strings for this tuning? The short answer is NO.

Because the plectrum tuning is close enough to the standard baritone tuning, most strings will work. With that said, I've found a huge difference in the tone and playability using different sets and tensions of strings. My particular preference is for a baritone set with a bit higher tension as the first and fourth strings have been lowered a whole step. I like the sound of a wound nylon on both the 3rd and 4th strings and I like the tension and feel of fluorocarbon for the 1st and 2nd strings. The sets that I generally use for my baritones are put together and sold through Mya Moe Ukelele Company <https://www.myamoeukuleles.com> . SouthCoast Strings <http://www.southcoastukes.com/ukulele.htm> also has an amazing variety of high quality strings that I've also used and enjoy.

The Chords and Shapes

To get a much better understanding of this tuning requires learning a few different chord shapes and voicings. In the plectrum tuning, there are basically 3 chord shapes (positions) for a major chord. If you're just starting out on this tuning, I suggest taking a week or two to learn and assimilate the major, minor, flatted seventh and diminished seventh chord shapes that are used in the three shapes (positions) mentioned above. A good way to do that is by learning them first on a C, then an F and then a G. For instance, there are three different shapes to make a C major chord. Learn those shapes and where they are first. Next, learn how to make those same three shapes into a C minor chord shape. After that, learn them as a flatted seventh chord and finally as a diminished chord. Once you do that, go on to an F chord and do the same thing. It will be easier each time you do it with a new chord as you'll already know the shape, but it will just start on a different fret. I've arranged the chord diagrams below in this way to make it easier to follow.

Most of the chord shapes below are "closed" shapes meaning that all four strings are fretted somewhere. The closed chords are also called "moveable" because they can be moved proportionally up or down, for example C to C#. Some of the shapes will be "open" meaning that not all of the strings are fretted for that chord, but some of the strings will be open. These will be the easiest ones to play at first for obvious reasons.

This is by no means a complete list of chords for plectrum tuning. There are many more variations of these and other chords, but the ones below are the most common ones to start out with. To learn more of your chords than pictured here, just google chords for plectrum banjo. As you proceed through my ukelele arrangements you'll soon begin to recognize many of these formations and/or variations of them. For the sake of clarity, I've labeled each of the three chord shapes as position 1, position 2 and position 3.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or to set up one one Skype lessons

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Have fun and don't forget to check out the accompanying video at

[**www.sandyweltmanmusic.com**](http://www.sandyweltmanmusic.com)