

Travis Picking for the Uke

Named after country-and-western pioneer Merle Travis, this is a style of fingerpicking characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern that is suited to many country western and folk songs and even some rock ballads. Although used originally on the guitar it can be used on many other stringed instruments including the ukulele!

Travis picking works for songs written in 4/4 time. The rhythm is distinct and once you are familiar with it you will be able to hear it or a derivation of it in many familiar songs!

Let's get started. Below is a tab showing you what strings are plucked with the associated rhythm. We will take it slowly to start with and begin by clapping the rhythm. Next let's try it using the Am7 chord (all open strings).

```
1+  2  +  3  +  4  +  
a--0-----0-----  
e-----0-----0-----  
c-----0-----0-----  
g--0-----0-----
```

Now let's try it with the C chord.

```
1+  2  +  3  +  4  +  
a--3-----3-----  
e-----0-----0-----  
c-----0-----0-----  
g--0-----0-----
```

Let's play several bars of just the C chord to get the feel of the rhythm.

Next let's alternate the C chord and the Am7 chord to get the feel of chord changes within the Travis picking style.

F chord

1+ 2 + 3 + 4 +
a--0-----0-----
e-----1-----1-----
c-----0-----0-----
g--2-----2-----

G chord

1+ 2 + 3 + 4 +
a--2-----2-----
e-----3-----3-----
c-----2-----2-----
g--0-----0-----

Now let's practice using some of the songs we are all familiar with:

Proud Mary

Blowin' In The Wind

What other songs can you think of that would work with the Travis picking pattern?

Have fun!