

Tuning

Every musician has the responsibility to play their instrument “in tune.” Thankfully it has never been easier to play in tune because tuners are inexpensive and they are simple to use. Today’s tuners can clip onto instruments, be downloaded as a smart phone app, or work as a stand alone device.

Tuning is a simple process but you need to remember these two things.

1. Know the string number of each open string.
 - String numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.
2. Know the letter name (pitch) of each open string.
 - String pitches, E, A, D, G, B, and E

The idea is to tune each string until it visually matches the center line of the tuner. The tuner will read out the string number and pitch. Make sure you are in-sync with this read out.

How Do Strings Get Out of Tune?

Perhaps the instrument hasn’t been played in a long time. Weather can be a factor hot/cold, or extreme change of temperature. Maybe you are putting new strings on your instrument or your strings are old.

What to Do When You Don’t Have a Tuner

First match your low E string to another source (another guitar, piano, tuning fork).

1. Play the 6th string, 5th fret (A) and tune the open 5th string (A)
2. 5th string 5th fret (D) and match the open 4th string (D)
3. 4th string 5th fret (G) to the open 3rd string (G)
4. 3rd string 4th fret (B) to the open 2nd string (B)
5. 2nd string 5th fret (E) to the open 1st string (E)

Compare your 1st and 6th strings and get used to hearing both as E. One high one low.

If you are about to practice a song or exercise play the beginning and make sure it sounds in tune.

