



5 Minute Guitar Lessons



Practice Aid: How to Tune a Guitar Part I: Standard Tuning with an Electronic Tuner

Lesson Overview:

This lesson demonstrates how to accurately tune a guitar to “standard” tuning (EADGBE) using an electronic guitar tuner: onics)

Tuning with an Electronic Guitar Tuner

Using a guitar tuner is a fast and accurate way of getting the instrument in tune, and is especially helpful if you’re new to making music. It takes a little time and practice to develop your ear well enough to hear the intervals and accurately tune the instrument. So I recommend that new players start by using an electronic guitar tuner.

A guitar tuner is great for picking up the small adjustments you need to make, but each string needs to be relatively close to its desired pitch. So the first step is to get us in the ballpark. Find the pitch for each string on a piano, or on another guitar that's almost in tune. When you hear the target pitch, pluck your string. If yours is higher, loosen the string to bring the pitch down. If yours is lower, tighten the string to bring the pitch up. (If you don't have another instrument handy for reference pitches, I'll be adding tuning pitch samples to the site soon. Stay tuned in to 5Minuteguitarlessons.com for the latest).

Depending on the tuner you're using, you could also watch its indicators to see what note it thinks you're playing as you tune it up or down. When you're in the ballpark, see the notes on the next page.

I use a Korg GT-3 guitar tuner that supports tuning for standard guitar and bass. It has lights on it that indicate when you’re in the ballpark. When you’re close, the light that represents the string you’re playing lights up.





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Once you get a string close enough, most tuners show some sort of indicator to tell you whether the note you're playing is higher or lower than the desired pitch, or right on target. If you're lower, tighten the string until the indicator shows that you're right on the targeted pitch.



If your string is higher than the targeted pitch, I like to take a couple additional steps. I generally like to approach the target pitch from below. Here's how:

First, loosen the string until you're just below the target pitch, then pull on the string a little to put some tension on it. Finally, tighten the string back up to the target pitch. I recommend this because the tuning pegs on some guitars have a little play in them. If you loosen a string to come down to pitch, the tuning pegs on some guitars will continue to loosen as you play, and you can end up with a string that's a little on the flat side. Hitting the target from below leaves the tuning peg with enough tension to avoid the tone flattening when you start banging on the string.

Continue this process with all 6 strings until the tuner shows that you're right on target for all strings. Double-check this once or twice, and adjust as necessary. Each time you tune a string, it changes the amount of tension the strings place on the neck, and it could slightly change the tuning of strings you've already adjusted. The idea is to get close with all strings, and make tiny adjustments until everything is perfectly in tune. Your mileage may vary. Try it out a couple times. You may find that yours is a very stable axe, and doesn't require you to cycle through this more than once.



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Lesson Link / Other Online Resources:

Video lesson link:

<http://www.5minuteguitarlessons.com/how-to-tune-a-guitar-electronic-tuner>