



5 Minute Guitar Lessons



Practice Aid: Lesson 2 – How to tune a Guitar (Open D Tuning)

Lesson Overview:

This lesson discusses alternate tunings and explores a few reasons you might want to make alternate tunings a part of your arsenal of guitar techniques. Then it demonstrates how to tune a guitar to Open D tuning.

This practice aid will serve as a cheat sheet for how to tune the guitar to an Open D tuning using the relative pitch harmonic method.

Why introduce alternate tunings so early?

Some of you reading this will undoubtedly wonder why I'm introducing what many consider an advanced topic as the second lesson in my beginner guitar series. The answer is simple. Open tunings give us a way to greatly simplify what you do with your fret-board hand, so you can spend some time learning how to use your picking and strumming hand. With that in mind, here's how to tune the guitar to Open D.

Open D Tuning

Open tunings are very useful to beginners when practicing strumming and picking patterns because they allow you to simplify what your fret-board hand has to do. Instead of having to think about where to put every finger, you can play all strings open, or fret all the strings at the same fret to play any other major chord. We'll demonstrate this in our next lesson on strum patterns. So let's get your guitar tuned to Open D!

To start, we'll assume your guitar is tuned to standard (EADGBE) tuning. See our first lesson on standard tuning for techniques to tune it up if your guitar has fallen out of tune.

To arrive at Open D, we'll need to tune 4 strings down either a half step or whole step (the pitch distance equivalent of 1 or two frets) so you get a D Major chord when strumming the open notes. The strings will be tuned to D, A, D, F#, A and D (6th string through 1st).



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Here's how to do it, step-by-step:

1. Tune the 6th string down a whole step (pitch distance of two frets) from E to D
2. Tune the 3rd string down a half step (pitch distance of one fret) from G to F#
3. Tune the 2nd string down a whole step from B to A
4. Tune the 1st string down a whole step from E to D

The following chart shows how to check the pitch on each string.

Open D Tuning – Relative Pitch Chart

D (6 th)	A (5 th)	D (4 th)	F# (3 rd)	A (2 nd)	D (1 st)
5 th fret	Open				
	5 th fret	Open			
		4 th fret	Open		
		7 th fret		Open	
				5 th fret	Open

Extra Credit: Other Alternate Tunings:

Here are a couple other alternate tunings that can be pretty handy.

DADGAD Tuning – Relative Pitch Chart

(Start with Open D tuning and raise the 3rd string a half step to G).

D (6 th)	A (5 th)	D (4 th)	G (3 rd)	A (2 nd)	D (1 st)
5 th fret	Open				
	5 th fret	Open			
		5 th fret	Open		
		7 th fret		Open	
				5 th fret	Open



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Open G Tuning

(From standard tuning, lower the 6th string to D. Lower the 5th string to G. Lower the 1st string to D.)

This is the sweet spot for playing “Honky Tonk Woman.”

D (6 th)	G (5 th)	D (4 th)	G (3 rd)	B (2 nd)	D (1 st)
5 th fret	Open				
	7 th fret	Open			
		5 th fret	Open		
			4 th fret	Open	
				3 rd fret	Open

Drop D Tuning

(Start with Standard tuning and drop the 6th string down to a D)

It’s not really an open tuning, but this one’s big in a lot of John Denver songs and at least a couple rock ballads!

D (6 th)	A (5 th)	D (4 th)	G (3 rd)	B (2 nd)	E (1 st)
7 th fret	Open				
	5 th fret	Open			
		5 th fret	Open		
			4 th fret	Open	
				5 th fret	Open

Lesson Link / Other Online Resources:

The video lesson can be downloaded at the following link:

<http://www.5minuteguitarlessons.com/fake-any-song-open-d-tuning>