

Mickey Howard Beginners guitar group 01/04/20
TUNING THE GUITAR

Hi there everybody I hope you are all well and have been practicing hard :)

Today I thought we would take a look at tuning the guitar and the steps taken to achieve this. Some of you may have an electronic tuner in which case it is easy to do. But what if you don't? Well before these little gadgets were invented, we had to tune the guitar manually starting from a reference tone like a piano or keyboard or a pitch pipe (a little blowing device that enables the pitches of the 6 different guitar strings to be played. And if you have access to the video you can see one demonstrated).

Here is a link for a FREE pitch pipe app for Android phones.
<https://apkpure.com/pitch-pipe-free/com.indraaziz.pitchpipefree>

Here is a link to a FREE pitch pipe for iPhone and iPad
<https://apps.apple.com/uy/app/pocket-pitch-the-singer-app/id1005725401>

So

Step 1. TAKE A REFERENCE TONE.

We would do this to find out how our low E string should sound.

If using one of the apps mentioned above:

On the App, play the tone called bottom E and adjust the guitar string pitch to sound the same by turning the corresponding tuning peg. It might take a few goes.

If you do not have access to a reference tone: It is possible to go through the steps listed to make the guitar be in tune with itself although this would not be in "concert pitch" i.e not in tune with other instruments. To do this listen to the thickest E string pitch and tune it, not too low or too high, and then follow the steps. If the guitar has been in tune previously then you will find that this E string is probably very close to its correct pitch.

If you are using a keyboard for reference:

Looking at the keyboard, you will see that there are black keys grouped together in alternate clusters of 2's and 3's.

Locate the centre of the keyboard and look for the cluster of 2 black keys.

Now count 4 clusters of black keys to the left and you will arrive at another pair of black keys.

Immediately to the right of these black keys is a white key. This key is called E and it is the correct pitch that we need to match our thickest guitar string to, again by turning the corresponding tuning peg either up or down depending where you string is pitched already. It might well be in tune from the last time you played the guitar.

You can look at the diagram if this is unclear **.

This diagram will also show you where the other 5 guitar string pitches are to be found on the keyboard.

Step 2.

So, having tuned our low E string to the correct pitch.

We take our guitar and place our finger (any finger) on the tuned E string at the 5th fret.

Next, pluck the string and being careful to get a pure note, it will be the correct pitch of the next open string down, which is the A string.

We now turn the tuning peg to change the pitch of the open A string to match the pitch of the note we plucked on the fretted E string. You may have to do this a few times to adjust the pitch until it is correct.

Step 3.

OK, having tuned our A string to the correct pitch, place a finger on the tuned A string at the 5th fret.

Pluck the A string, it will be the correct pitch of the next open string down, which is the D string.

Turn the tuning peg to change the pitch of the open D string until it matches the pitch of the note we plucked on the fretted A string.

Step 4.

Place finger on D string at 5th fret.

Pluck the fretted D string, (and as you may well have guessed) this is the pitch that we tune the next open string to, which is the G string.

Step 5.

OK, this is slightly different

Place a finger on the tuned G string this time at the 4TH FRET.

Pluck the fretted G string and tune the pitch of the next open string (which is the B string) to the fretted G string you have just plucked.

Step 6.

Right, so now we place a finger on the B string at the 5th fret.

Pluck the fretted B string and tune the last open string which is our other E string (the thin one).

When this has been tuned to match the fretted B string then the guitar should be in tune. Yaay!

You can repeat any of these steps to double check your tuning.

You can also check how well you have done by using your electronic tuner.

You might wonder why, if you do have a tuner that you need to know this technique of tuning a guitar?.. well it doesn't hurt to train your ears to recognise if a guitar is in tune or not and you might at some point be with an out of tune instrument and no tuner at hand.

Also sometimes the tuner's batteries do run out.

Hope you all stay well in these strange times and I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Mickey.