

My GUITAR LESSONS

Learn How To Tune A Guitar With 'My Guitar Lessons'



Tuning your guitar is a very important skill that every guitar player should have. If you are constantly out of tune you, and everyone that has to listen to you, will probably not enjoy playing your guitar as much as you could. Being in tune as much as possible is one of the greatest things that you can do to make yourself sound like a pro. This lesson will start out by showing you what some of your options are when you go out to buy a guitar tuner. Once we look at some of your options for buying a tuner, we will learn how to use a digital tuner to tune up.

There are three basic categories of tuners that 'My Guitar Lessons' are going to cover in this lesson, clip on tuners, pedal tuners and Rack-mounted tuners.

One thing that you should be aware of is the difference between a chromatic and non-chromatic tuner. If a tuner is “chromatic” that just means that it can tune any note that you can think of, not just the six notes on the guitar. A non-chromatic tuner usually only tunes the six notes found on the open strings of the guitar.

Clip On Tuners



Let's look at clip on tuners first. Clip on tuners are really convenient because you just clip them on to the head stock of your guitar and leave them there. Any time you want to check your tuning you just hit an open string and look over to see if the

note needs to go up or down. These tuners work off of the vibrations of your guitar and work with both electric and acoustic guitars. My Guitar Lessons tutors sell these for around £18.

Pedal Tuners



Pedal tuners require that you have an electric or acoustic/electric guitar. These tuners are very practical because, once you stomp on them they mute your guitar signal. If you are playing or plan on playing in a live situation, pedal tuners are a great choice because the audience will not have to listen to you tune through your amp or the sound system. Stomp on the pedal tuner to activate it. After you tune up, stomp on the pedal tuner again to bring your guitar signal back. Pedal tuners usually cost about £80.00.

Rack Mounted Tuners



Rack mounted tuners are not so common but can be run from your effects loop so as not to interfere with the in-line signal. They are far more accurate, but take up a lot of room, so are often used in conjunction with a rack mounted effects unit. These can cost £150.00 and upwards.

Notes on your guitar

Before we start learning how to tune the guitar let's review the names of the strings on the guitar. The names of the open strings on the guitar from low to high are E, A, D, G, B and E. If you have a regular hand held tuner you can probably just plug your guitar into the tuner. If you have an acoustic, you can just use the mic on the tuner to pick up the sound.

Once your tuner is on play your low E string. The tuner should indicate a note, hopefully it is an E. If it's not an E we need to adjust the tuning to make it an E. Let's say that you hit your low E string and the tuner display says that you are playing a D flat. D is before E in the musical alphabet so, this means that we need to raise the pitch of the string until it becomes an E. Imagine that the tuner said that the note that you were playing was an F#. In this case, you would need lower the pitch of the note until it became an E. At this point you should use your tuning peg for your low E string to raise or lower the note until it becomes an E. Okay, you have your E string tuned to an E note, but is it in tune?

Most tuners have a needle or some light that let you know if a note is sharp or flat. If the note that you are tuning is flat, the needle or light will be off to the left of centre. If the note that you are playing is sharp, the needle or light will be off to the right of centre. The idea is to "tune up" the note if it is flat and to "tune down" the note if it is sharp. When the note is "in tune" the needle will be in the middle of the display. If you have a tuner with lights the "in tune" light is usually green and in the middle of the display. Repeat this process for all five remaining strings. Don't be frustrated if you break a string or if it takes you a while to really get the whole idea of tuning. That's normal.