Tuning Video!

Congratulations on signing up for guitar lessons! I'm thrilled to have you and am excited to get to know you!

Today I'm going to show you how to use a tuner to tune your guitar.

- Every practice session must begin with tuning up!
- Keep in mind that taking your guitar in and out of the case will often bump your instrument's tuning machines.
- Changes in temperature and changes in humidity can tighten or loosen your strings.
- Even if you are a pro, tuning up backstage may not save you if you are about to walk into a hot, crowded room
- So please make sure you up at the beginning of every practice session. This includes your lessons! Tuning up before you got here doesn't count!

There are really only a few things you need to know to tune your guitar. Those things are

1. What buttons to avoid on your tuner
2. The musical alphabet and how it repeats
3. The names of your open strings

There are many different types of tuners out there, but they all function the same basic way. They are "listening" to a single note and trying to identify what musical pitch it "hears." The tuner's display will show you how close that note is to being in tune, similar to the needles on your car's dashboard.

We want the needle to be in the very center. If it's to the left, it's too loose. If it's to the right, the string is too tight. Some tuners have an up/down orientation rather than a left/right one. The idea is the same. If the needle is below center, our string is too loose and will need to be tightened. If it's above the center, we are too tight and need to loosen the string.

Before we tune, let's make sure all of your tuner's settings are correct.

Many tuners show **a 3-digit number** somewhere. If yours does show this number, make sure this number reads "440…" that's four-four-zero. There will be a button labeled PITCH or a simple UP/DOWN arrow. If you can't quickly find the correct button, pause this video and consult your tuner's manual.

Next, some tuners have different settings for different instruments. If your tuner has these setting, you'll likely see a single SMALL letter in a corner showing either a C, G, B, V, or U. We want "C" for chromatic. G stands for guitar, B is for bass guitar, V is violin, U is ukulele. Resist the urge to use the G setting.

IF your tuner displays a 1 digit number, this number is telling you what string number it thinks you are playing (1,2,3,4,5 or 6). This is "Guitar" mode rather than "chromatic" mode. The problem with this mode is that if your guitar is WAY out of tune, the tuner gets confused about which string you are playing. This tends to happen to beginners in general, on old guitars with old strings, when brand new strings were freshly put on, or when there are curious children nearby.

Okay, our tuner is set to 440 and it's in chromatic mode. Now lets clip it on the headstock. These clip on tuners are very popular because they are cheap AND accurate. Because they work on a vibration sensor instead of the older style microphone, you can tune in a noisy environment. If you have an older style tuner, you'll have to play it on your lap near the guitar's sound hole. Most older tuners have an ¼" jack input for the electric guitarists to use.

Now need to know the musical alphabet. The musical alphabet is simple, it is A B C D E F G. There is no H. Once we get to G, it just starts over again: A B C D E F G A B C D E F G on and on until you either run out of instrument or can no longer hear the notes.

Many students find it helpful to write the letters out starting at the bottom of a piece of paper working toward the top like SO…

As the letters go UP or FORWARD in the alphabet, your guitar strings are getting tighter. As we go DOWN/BACKWARD the strings are getting looser.

This way you can easily see that an F is a little bit higher than an E. Why is this important? Because the tuner can only tell you what notes it hears, not what the note is SUPPOSED to be. If you play the "E" string but your tuner says "D," is your tuner is not broken. It's just telling you that you are a full letter off.

One last thing is that there are some notes in between the letters. There is an note in between D and E. This note could be called by a **sharp or a flat**. Sharps look like a pound-sign or a hashtag. Flats look a lot like a lower case letter b. A sharp is extra high. A flat is extra low. So the note in between D and E could be called a D sharp, as in "Extra D!" or that same note could be called Eb flat, as in "Diet E." Some tuners use the sharp symbol, some used the flat symbol. Just be on the lookout for one of these characters showing up on your tuner's display.

Now is a good time to talk about what your strings are supposed to be tuned to. Starting with the thickest string, the one closest to your chin, is E. This is the 6th string (not the 1st). The next string as a move my hand toward the floor is an A. This is the 5th string. The 4th string is D. The 3rd string is G. The 2nd String is a B. And the 1st, skinniest string is another E.

A good way to remember the tuning is the simple saying "Eddie Ate Dynamite Good Bye Eddie"

Now were are ready to tune!

This is a good time to refer back to the piece of paper with our letters on it.

I'm going to hit the high, skinny "E" string. We know it's supposed to be "E" but what if the tuner says "D." Which "D" is it? Chances are that it is the D that's just below the E. Since we are BELOW where we need to be, we need to move UP by TIGHTENING the string.

It is unlikely that it would be the D all the way up here. Your string would probably break before it got that far out of tune. When tuning, you don't have to be afraid of breaking strings. BUT if you aren't sure which direction to go, try tuning down/loosening first. Strings can't break by being tuned too low. If they're too low, they'll just flop around and not really sound like anything.

Ok. We've identified what the string is supposed to be, an E, and what it is, a D. We've decided that we need to TIGHTEN the string a bit. **Which knob do you turn**? Well follow the string you plucked and find

where it attaches. You will turn this one. **Which way should you turn it?** I don't know, it depends on how your guitar was strung. You can find out by first plucking the string, then looking at the tuner. While the string is still vibrating, turn the tuning machine slightly. If the needle moves Down, the you just loosened the string. If it moved up a little, you're on the right track. In this case you'd keep tightening the string until the tuner showed a large E AND the needle was in the center.

A little tip is stop turning the knob the moment the tuner stops giving you a reading. Then pluck the string again and continue turning. You want to get a constant reading on the tuner. You do not need to continuously pick the string. CONSTANT picking will actually give you a slightly false reading.

That's it! We covered the setting up of your tuner's buttons, where to place it, how to read the tuner, the names of your guitar strings, and how to decide which way to turn the guitar's tuning machines.

Head on over to the link at the end of this video and take a quick quiz. The quiz is simply designed to make sure you understand your tuner AND alert me to any questions you still have.

www.quarterbendguitar.com/tunequiz