



Homeschool Music Curriculum

Guitar for All Grade Levels



Tuning Guide

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MME Tuning Guide

Welcome to the **MME Tuning Guide!** This document contains detailed instructions for tuning your guitar. It not only shows you how to tune, but it also provides an approach for teaching your student to tune (when he or she is ready).

Be sure to read our important tuning tips on pages 14-15 before your first tuning attempt. Our tips will make the tuning task even easier.



Also, If you have never tuned a guitar before, we suggest watching our video tutorial on **Learning to Tune the Guitar** at [MakeMusicEasy.com](https://www.makemusiceeasy.com/tune-guitar) It can be helpful to see exactly how it's done.

Tuning the Guitar for Your Child

Early on, you should tune your child's guitar. Learning to tune can be confusing and, in some cases, physically awkward for a child. Although it should be taught eventually, learning how to tune is usually not the best way to introduce a child to the guitar.

How long you tune the guitar for your child will, for the most part, depend upon your student's age. For example, if your child is 6 years old, you may end up tuning the guitar for a whole year or longer. If 9 years of age, it may be several weeks until he or she is ready to tune independently. If your child is 12, you may be able to teach tuning after the first few lessons.

Our "Tuning Tips" section will also go a long way in terms of making the tuning process quicker and easier. And, if your child struggles with tuning – no problem! Just continue to do the tuning for him or her for as long as necessary, teaching this skill sometime in the future.

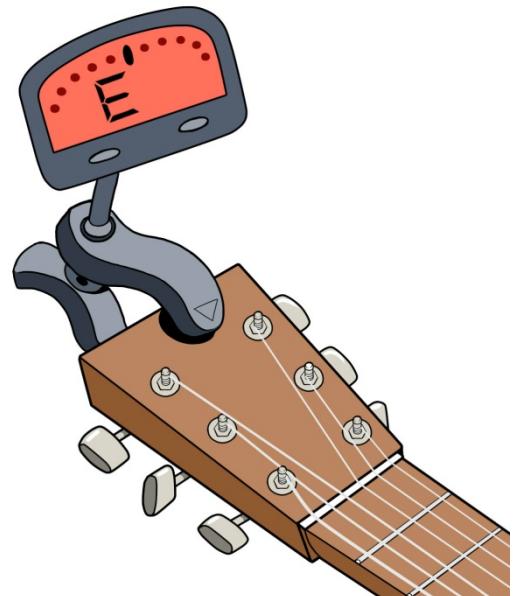
NOTE

Regardless of who does the tuning, be sure the guitar is in tune every time your student picks it up to play.

Selecting a Tuner

We recommend purchasing an **electronic tuner**, which will allow you to tune quickly and easily. An electronic tuner, a valuable accessory for every guitarist, works for both electric and acoustic guitars.

There are many types of electronic tuners, but most are similar in terms of functionality. Specifically, we find that “clip-on” tuners work the best. These tuners clip right onto the head of the guitar, where they can sense the vibration of the strings being plucked – causing them to be accurate and also totally unaffected by outside noise. For this reason, clip-on tuners have become the most popular style of electronic tuner.



NOTE

While we prefer – and highly recommend – electronic guitar tuners (they are portable, fairly easy to use, and usually inexpensive), you may want to explore free guitar tuners on the internet. Just search on your phone or computer “guitar tuner” to find a wide variety of free tuners available.

Tuning the Guitar

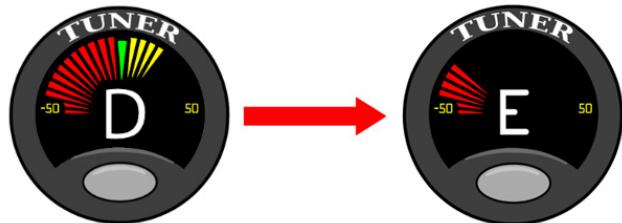
There are just three steps for tuning your guitar with an electronic tuner. Each of these steps is discussed fully in the next 7 pages.

Step 1: Identify the string names

Proper guitar string identification is essential. Our Guitar Tuning Sheet (see page 16) will help you easily identify the string names when tuning. You (and someday your student) can use it as long as necessary until string names are memorized.

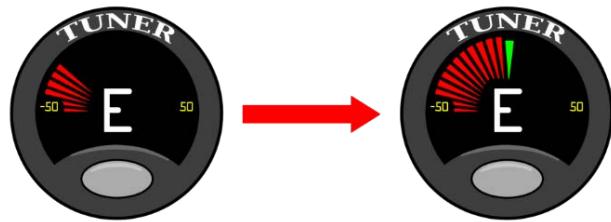
Step 2: Make sure the tuner reads the correct note

When a string is too far out of tune, the tuner may initially display a note that is higher or lower than the note assigned to the string. When this happens, the first step is to adjust the string until the tuner indicates the assigned note.



Step 3: Fine tune the string

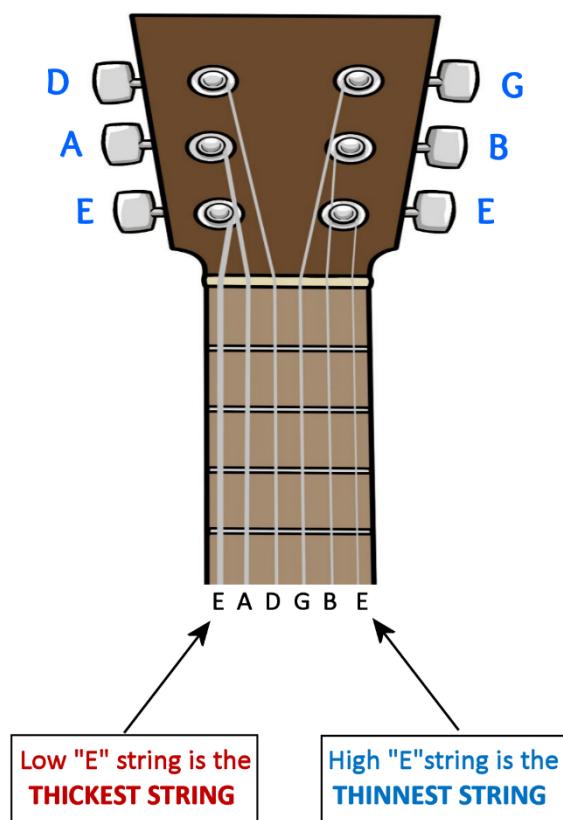
After verifying that the tuner indicates the correct note assigned to the string, the string must be further adjusted until the tuner indicates the string is vibrating at the exact rate specified for the note.



Step 1: Identify the String Names

The first step is to identify the names of the strings used in **Standard Tuning**. There are other possible tunings for a guitar, but Standard Tuning is the most common, and the one that you should use.

Standard Tuning defines the string pitches as **E, A, D, G, B, and E**, from lowest (low **E**) to highest (high **E**). Notice that both the thickest and thinnest strings are **E** notes.



Strings Names: E A D G B E (from thickest to thinnest)

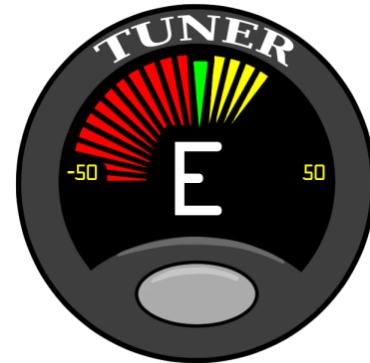
NOTE

You can use our **Guitar Tuning Sheet** (see page 16) when tuning to help remember the string names.

Step 2: Make sure your tuner reads the correct note

If you are using a clip-on tuner, be sure to attach it to your guitar. When you pluck the string that you are tuning, the tuner will automatically display a note.

If your guitar has been tuned recently, the correct note name for that string is what will normally appear. For example, when you pluck the **E** string, your tuner's display will likely say "E," but it may still require some fine tuning – which we'll discuss in the next section.



But if the string is very far out of tune, an entirely different note name might appear on the tuner. So your first step will be to make an adjustment just to get the tuner to show the correct note for that string.

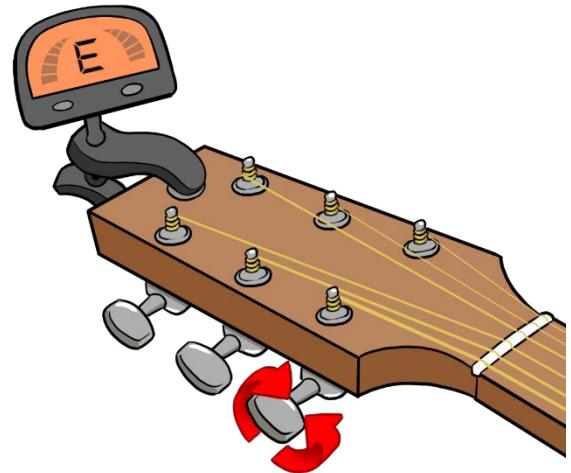
If you're using an electronic clip-on tuner, then you're most likely using what is sometimes referred to as a **Chromatic Tuner**. Chromatic tuners allow you to tune any string to any note of the musical alphabet.

Here's a list of the 12 notes in the musical alphabet that a chromatic tuner can display. The entire musical alphabet contains the letters **A, B, C, D, E, F, and G**. You'll notice that some notes have a sharp (#) symbol after them. We've colored the Standard Tuning guitar notes (below) in **red** so that you can easily identify them:

A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#

To move a string to a different note, you'll have to adjust the tuning peg that's attached to the string.

When you tighten the tuning peg, it will raise the pitch of the string, taking you forward through the musical alphabet. For example, if you are tuning the **E** string and the tuner initially reads **D** or **D#**, you'll have to tighten the tuning peg in order to raise the pitch of the string. Then pluck the string and look at the tuner to make sure it says **E**.



A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#

(tighten tuning peg to raise pitch)

When you loosen the tuning peg, it will lower the pitch of the string, taking you backwards through the musical alphabet.

For example, if you want to tune the **E** string, but the tuner reads **F**, you'll have to loosen the tuning peg in order to lower the pitch of the string. Then pluck the string to make sure the tuner says **E**.

A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#

(loosen tuning peg to lower pitch)

In music, these 12 notes repeat over and over again. Therefore, after the **G#** note, you'll be back to **A**, and the musical alphabet starts all over again, one octave higher.

This is important to know because if you want to tune the **A** string, but your electronic tuner indicates that you're getting the **G** or **G#** note, it just means that your string is tuned too low.

The remedy? Move the tuner to **A** by raising the pitch of the string (i.e., by tightening the tuning peg while plucking the string) until the tuner reads the correct note – **A**. (The diagram below shows the position of **A** in the musical alphabet.)

G, G#, A, A#, B, C etc.

 (tighten tuning peg to raise pitch)

Step 3: Fine Tune the String

When your tuner finally displays the correct note name for the string, you'll be ready to begin **fine tuning**. We'll use the high **E** string for each of the following examples.



Most modern tuners, such as the one depicted above, use a colored meter to identify the pitch of a note. When you pluck a string, this meter indicates whether the note is flat, sharp, or already "in tune."

Flat means the pitch is too low, whereas **sharp** means the pitch is too high.

NOTE

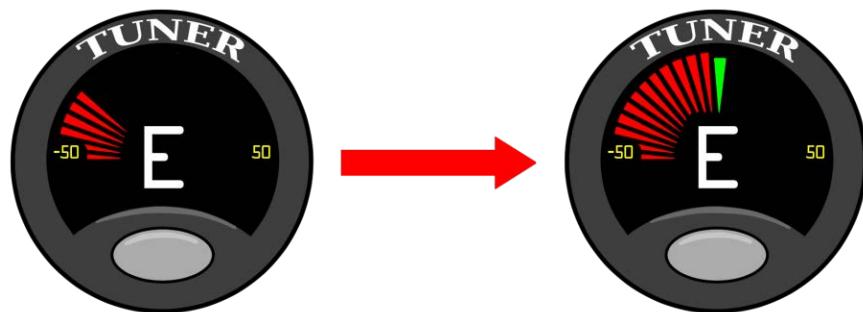
Your tuner may look slightly different than the one pictured above. There are many different styles of electronic tuners; however, they all basically work the same.

➤ When the String is Flat

When you pluck the **E string**, the meter may indicate that the note is **flat** (i.e., the pitch is too low).



This means that you must tighten the tuning peg and continue plucking until you raise the pitch and bring the indicator directly over the E.

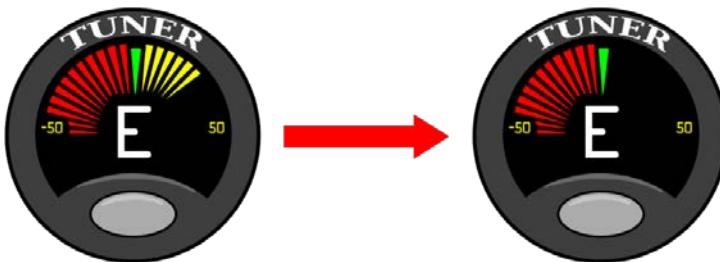


➤ When the String is Sharp

When you pluck the **E string**, the meter may indicate that the note is **sharp** (i.e., the pitch is too high).



This means that you must loosen the tuning peg and continue plucking until you lower the pitch and bring the indicator over the **E**.



➤ When the String is Already in Tune

Many times, when you pluck a string, it's already in tune. This is because your guitar has stayed in tune from that last time you tuned it. When this is the case, no adjustments need to be made to the tuning peg.



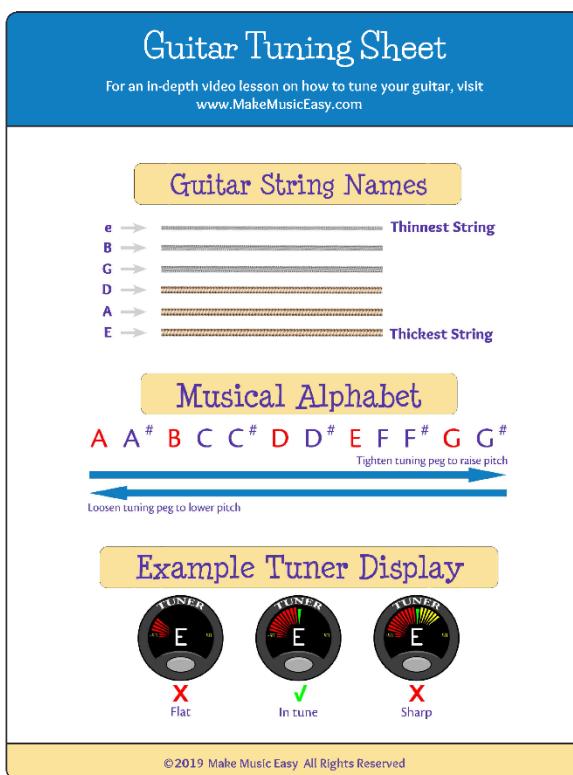
Tuning the Remaining Strings

Now that you know how to tune the E string, you can continue this process with the next 5 strings: **A, D, G, B** and the high **E**.

For each string, be sure that you follow the three step process of:

- 1. Identifying the string names**
- 2. Making sure the tuner reads the correct note**
- 3. Fine tuning the string**

We've included a **Guitar Tuning Sheet** at the end of this guide (see Page 16), which summarizes this process and can serve as a quick reminder when tuning.



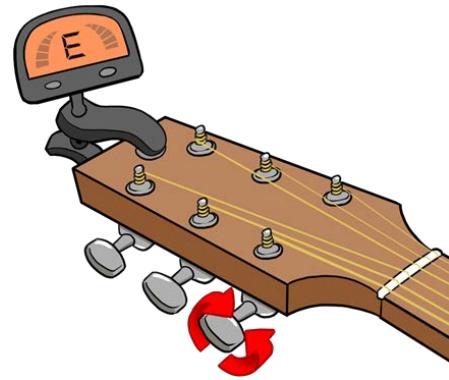
Tuning Tips

Tuning, like anything else with guitar, is a skill that's developed through experience. The process of tuning can take several minutes at first, but with practice it may eventually take only a few seconds. The following tips will help you (and later on, your student) tune more quickly and easily:

- Sit in a comfortable “playing” position, holding the guitar with good posture.
- Make sure you're tuning the string to the correct note. For example, don't tune the **E** string to an **A** note!
- Be aware of sharp signs (#) beside a note in the tuner display. For example, if you are tuning the **G** string, be sure that there isn't a sharp sign next to the **G**. If there is, you'll be tuning to a **G#** note, which is incorrect.
- Pluck the string you're tuning, letting it ring out for 3 or 4 seconds, to keep the note visible in the tuner's display. Don't wait too long between plucks and don't pluck too quickly. The goal is to keep the string ringing out. This will prevent the tuner from “bouncing around” and randomly displaying wrong notes.
- Make sure you are adjusting the tuning peg that's connected to the string you're tuning. A common mistake is plucking the right string and turning the wrong peg or, conversely, turning the right peg and plucking the wrong string.
- When fine tuning, turn the tuning peg slowly. This will allow you to gradually move the arrow to the center of the tuner's display, and it will prevent you from overshooting this point.



- Keep your grip on the tuning peg until the string is in tune. This will save time. **Don't do this:** turn the peg a little, take your fingers off, turn a little more, and take your fingers off again.
- Make sure you're turning the tuning peg in the correct direction. For example, when you want to raise the pitch, make sure you are tightening the peg. If you're not sure which way to turn the peg to tighten the string, just turn it in any direction to get started and begin from there.
- Some tuners have a button to adjust pitch calibration, usually between 430-450 hertz. If your tuner has this option, make sure your tuner is calibrated to 440, which is used for standard tuning.
- Use the **Guitar Tuning Sheet** on the next page for a reminder of string names and tuning concepts.



Guitar Tuning Sheet

For an in-depth video lesson on how to tune your guitar, visit
www.MakeMusicEasy.com

Guitar String Names



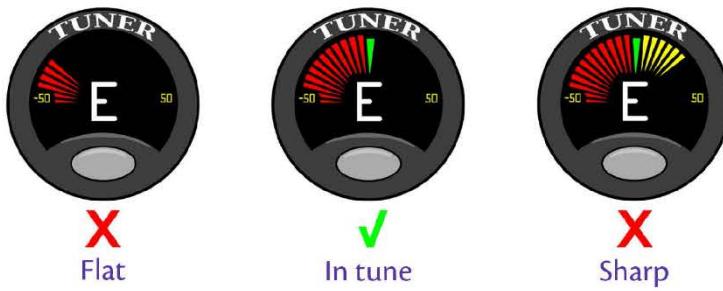
Musical Alphabet

A A[#] B C C[#] D D[#] E F F[#] G G[#]

Tighten tuning peg to raise pitch

Loosen tuning peg to lower pitch

Example Tuner Display



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