Tuning a Guitar

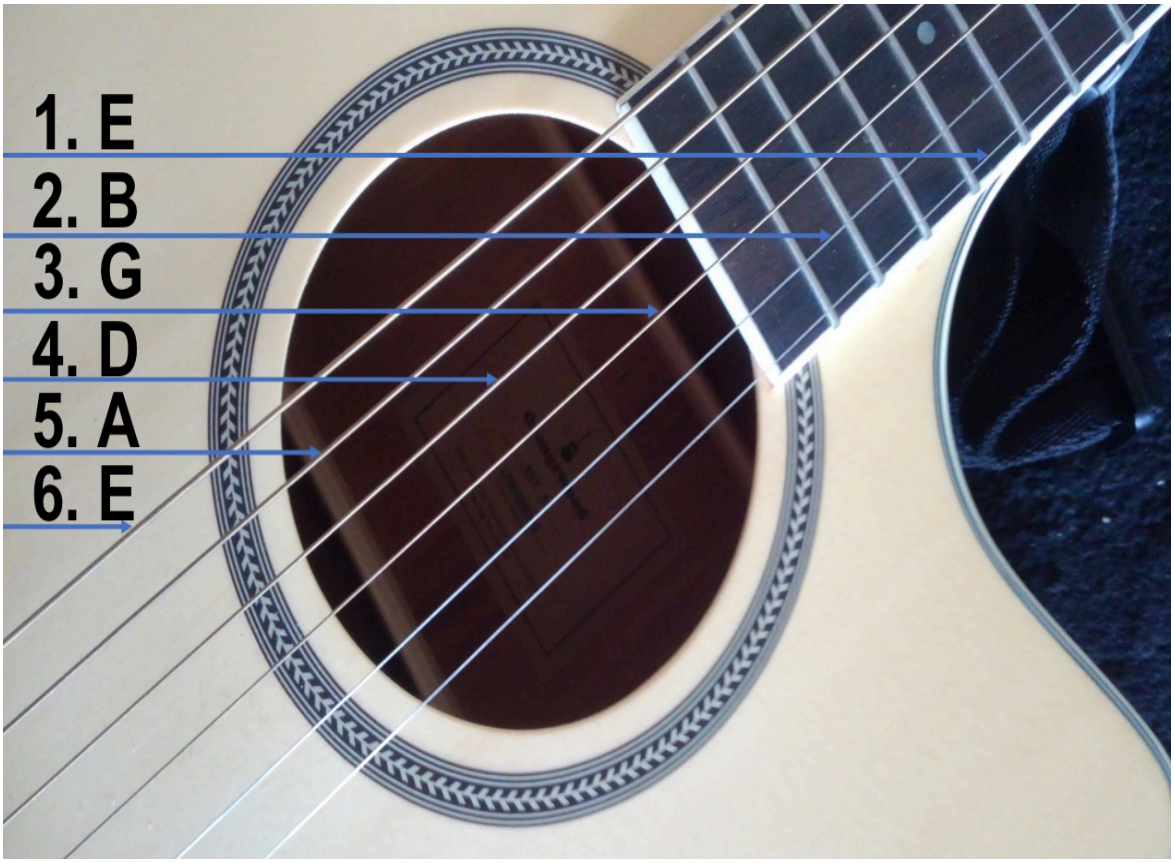
Contents

Chapter 1. How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar

This tutorial is for standard tuning of a guitar.

You will first need to see if your guitar has tuning pegs on the left and the right side of the headstock or just on the left side. See this reference about guitar basics *(on page 9)*.

1. Double-click on the guitar tuning app icon on your phone.
   I recommend using the Fender Tune app. Some tuning apps are even available online so you just go to a website. However, because you will tune your guitar most every time you pick it up to play it, having the Fender Tune app on your phone is adviseable.
2. Place phone near where you will sit.
3. Pick up guitar with left hand on neck.
4. With your right hand, pick up your guitar pick and hold it between your index finger and your thumb.
5. Sit down on a couch or chair.
6. Put the guitar in playing position on left knee.
7. Tune one string at a time starting with string six (the thickest string).



a. Check the pitch for that string against the tuning app.

b. If the pitch is low, you need to tighten the strings by turning the corresponding tuning key. The adage righty tighty, lefty loosy does not always hold for guitar tuning. Tuning keys that are right tighten the strings when the tuning key is rotated clockwise. Those on the left side of the headstock are tightened counter-clockwise.

c. If the pitch is high, loosen the string by turning the tuning keys clockwise for those on the left of the headstock, and counter-clockwise for those on the right.

d. Continue tuning each string with this procedure until all six strings are tuned properly.

Now, your guitar is in tune. You are ready to play!

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Electric Guitar *(on page 6)*

Harmonic Tuning *(on page 7)*

Relative Tuning *(on page 8)*

Drop-D Tuning *(on page 13)*

Drop-C Tuning *(on page 14)*

Chapter 2. How to Tune an Electric Guitar

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

Harmonic Tuning *(on page 7)*

Relative Tuning *(on page 8)*

Drop-D Tuning *(on page 13)*

Drop-C Tuning *(on page 14)*

Chapter 3. Harmonic Tuning

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

How to Tune an Electric Guitar *(on page 6)*

Relative Tuning *(on page 8)*

Drop-D Tuning *(on page 13)*

Drop-C Tuning *(on page 14)*

Chapter 4. Relative Tuning

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

How to Tune an Electric Guitar *(on page 6)*

Harmonic Tuning *(on page 7)*

Drop-D Tuning *(on page 13)*

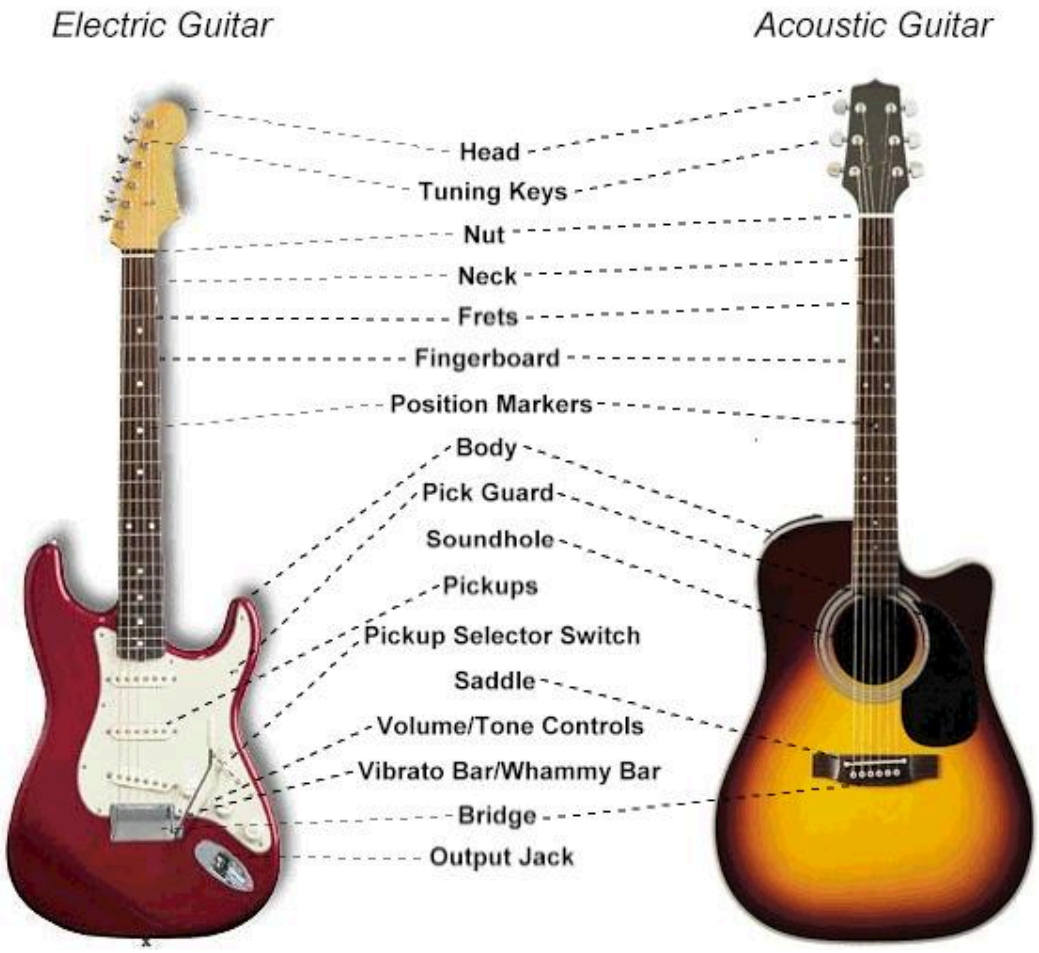
Drop-C Tuning *(on page 14)*

Chapter 5. Guitar Basics

Guitars come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and configurations, but they have certain features in common.

Guitar Parts

Figure 1. Guitar Parts



Standard guitars have six strings. Guitars can be acoustic, electric, or a combination of the two, acoustic/electric.

Acoustic guitars have a sound hole that emits the tones. Playing the acoustic guitar does not require that you plug it in.

Electric guitars use pickups that convert string vibrations into an electric signal. This electric signal is sent to an amplifier to produce sound. Built-in effects in the amplifier or effects pedals can change the sound that the amplifier makes.

Acoustic/electric guitars can be played without being plugged in. However, acoustic/electric guitars can also be plugged in and use effects pedals.

Headstock Configurations

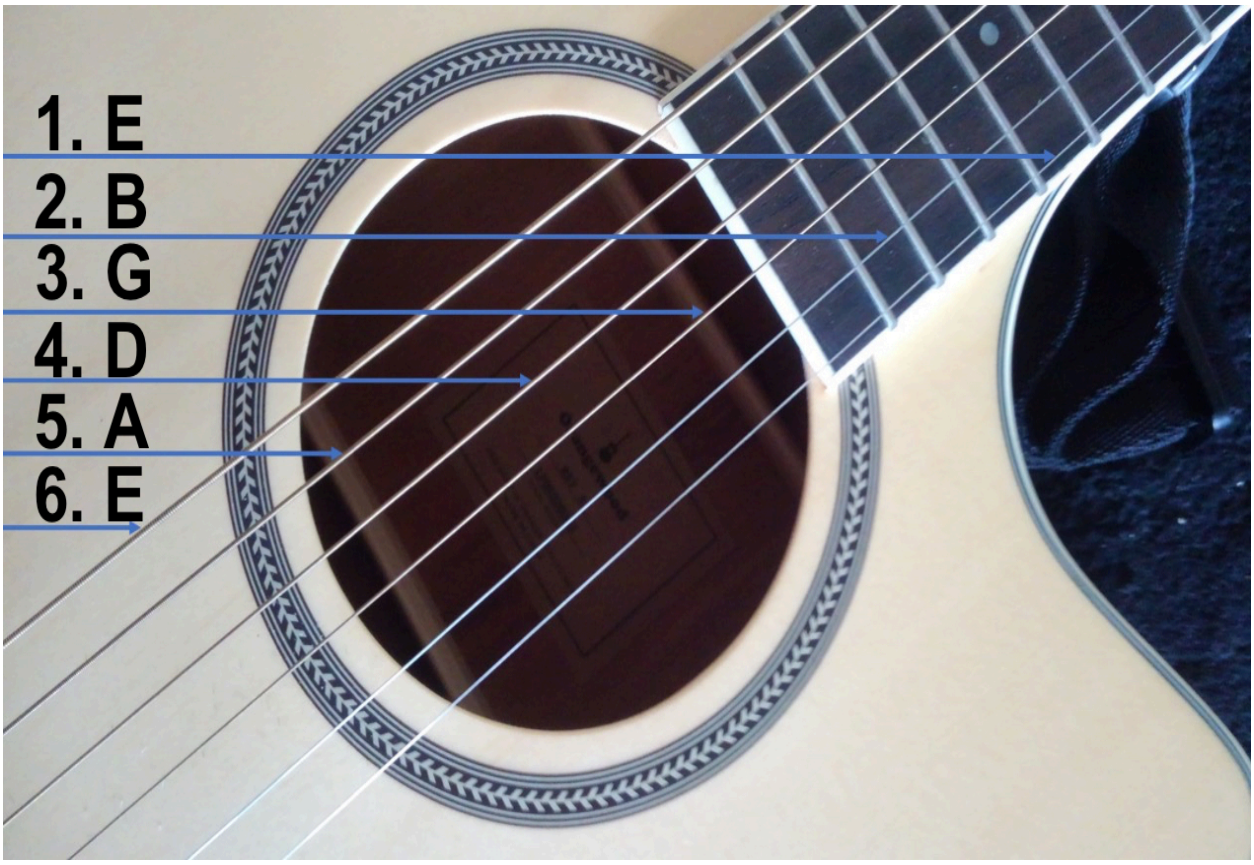


Guitars can have one of several different headstock configurations. Some guitars' tuning keys are all on the left side. Others have three tuning keys on the left and three on the right. Another less common configuration has four tuning keys on the left and two on the right.

The way you tighten a string depends on the direction it is wound around the tuning peg. Proper setup requires that the tuning pegs corresponding to the tuning keys on the left have the strings wound around them counter clockwise. If it is wound counter-clockwise around the tuning peg (as it is done for the tuning keys are on the left side of the headstock), you will have to turn the tuning key counter-clockwise to tighten the string.

For tuning keys on the right side of the head stock (which have the string wound clockwise), you need to turn the tuning key clockwise to tighten the string.

Strings



Guitar strings are numbered one to six with the string that has the highest notes being one. This numbering arrangement from six to one is opposite of what you would expect from going from lowest to highest tones. This is also the way they are arranged from top (string six) to bottom (string one) for right handed guitarists when playing.

The strings are also referred to with the notes that they play when in open position. The notes from string six down to string one are: low E, A, D, G, B, high E.

When referring to the notes a number after the letter designates the notes octive. So, going from string six to string one the notes are actually E2, A2, D3, G3, B3, and E4 respectively.

Frets

Six-string guitars can have between 20 and 24 frets. Frets are numbered from fret one (next to the headstock) to fret 20, 21, 22, or 24 next to the bridge, depending on how many frets your guitar has. Playing notes on a fret means that your finger holds down the string against the fret with a certain number. In the case of the first fret, for example, you would press down your index finger to the space just left of the fret when looking down at the guitar in playing position.

Most commonly, the fret number refers to the space above the fretwire that you use to play a note.

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

How to Tune an Electric Guitar *(on page 6)*

Harmonic Tuning *(on page 7)*

Relative Tuning *(on page 8)*

Drop-D Tuning *(on page 13)*

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Chapter 6. Drop-D Tuning

Drop-D tuning involves tuning the low E string (E2) and high E string (E4) a whole tone lower to low D (D2) and high D (D4) respectively. This allows easier playing of specific chords.

The notes in Drop-D tuning from sting six to sting one are D, A, D, G, B, and D respectively. Specifically the notes are D2, A2, D3, G3, B3, D4. You will notice that only the high and low E's change pitch compared to standard tuning.

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

How to Tune an Electric Guitar *(on page 6)*

Harmonic Tuning *(on page 7)*

Relative Tuning *(on page 8)*

Drop-C Tuning *(on page 14)*

Chapter 7. Drop-C Tuning

Drop-C tuning involves tuning the low E string (E2, string six) and high E string (E4, string one) two whole tones lower to low C (C2) and high C (C4) respectively. This allows easier playing of specific chords.

The notes in Drop-D tuning from sting six to sting one are C, A, D, G, B, and C respectively. Specifically the notes are C2, A2, D3, G3, B3, C4. You will notice that only the high and low E's change pitch compared to standard tuning.

Related reference

Guitar Basics *(on page 9)*

Related information

How to Tune an Acoustic Guitar *(on page 3)*

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