

Tuning guitar or bass

1. Use an electronic tuner



- Pluck a single string on full volume/full tone.
- If the light swings to the left of centre, the note is **flat** or too low in pitch. You must therefore tighten the string until the display lights up in the centre.
- If the light swings to the right the note is **sharp** or too high, so loosen to compensate.

Auto mode means the tuner will only recognise the notes of the strings EADGBE or EADG for bass. **Chromatic** means the tuner can recognise all notes.

2. Use reference notes

- Play your CD tuning notes or log onto a handy utility such as:
<http://www.gieson.com/Library/projects/utilities/tuner/>



The above website contains an advanced tuner, including bass, ukelele and a detune mode. Eb tuning is called 'Hendrix tuning' on this website.

- Use 3 steps to compare to reference notes: **Listen, twang, turn**. Mistakes can be made when steps are muddled and too much turning can snap a string or bend the neck!
- If in doubt loosen until obviously flat then start again.

3. Use relative method (the fret 5 rule*)



- Pluck E string fret 5, this makes the note A. You can then play your A string and listen to the difference. Repeat for the next pair of strings along and so on. Move from low to high one string at a time.
- The only string that does not obey the fret 5 rule is the G which must be held at fret 4 to tune the next string (B).

4. Use harmonics



- Lightly touch the low E at fret 5 directly above the fret. Pluck a note and then quickly remove your finger and let the high pitched **harmonic** ring.
- Compare this harmonic with the next string (A) down at fret 7. The two notes should match and you can adjust the A string as needed.
- Listen for a wobble between the two notes, as the second note comes into pitch the wobble slows down then disappears.
- Use frets 5/7 on adjacent strings for this method except for G to B where you must use G at fret 9 and B at fret 5.

5. Checking intonation (the f rule)

- Harmonics may be used to check your **intonation** or 'in-tune-ness' of an individual string, if it is already tuned with fresh strings on.
- Compare a harmonic at fret 12 to a fretted note at 12.
- If the fretted note is **flat** then move your bridge saddle forward or vice-versa.