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Chapter 1: Reviewing the Basics

Tuning the Guitar



Before playing anything, it is always a good idea to *tune* your guitar. Track 1 of the enclosed CD is a tuning track you can use as a reference to tune all six strings.

Using a Digital Guitar Tuner

Another way to tune is by using a *digital guitar tuner*. Guitar tuners are inexpensive and are an easy way to ensure that your guitar is in tune. Here's how they work:

1. Use an instrument cable to plug your guitar into the input jack on the tuner. Or, if you play acoustic guitar, make sure you buy a tuner with a built-in microphone that can "hear" you play.
2. Make sure the tuner is turned on and the volume is turned up on your guitar.
3. Some tuners automatically sense which tone you're playing but others have a slider or dial used to select the tuning *itches* or tones. (*Pitch* also refers to the highness or lowness of a tone.) If the latter is the case, you should select the pitch "E."
4. Pick the *open* 1st string (without fretting the string with your left hand). The 1st string is the skinniest string, closest to the floor. Watch the tuner while you do this. The needle or LED display will move to the left if the string is *flat* (too loose and too low in pitch) or to the right if the string is *sharp* (too tight and too high in pitch). If it's exactly in the middle, the string is in tune.
5. Locate the *tuning peg* (see page 7) that adjusts the 1st string. If the string is flat, turn the peg slightly to tighten the string. If the string is sharp, turn the peg slightly to loosen the string. Check it again using the tuner. Keep making small adjustments until the tuner tells you the string is in tune.

6. Make sure the pitch to which you are tuning is actually an E. When using a tuner that requires you to select the tuning pitches, this is not a problem. When using a tuner that automatically senses the pitch, however, you have to be careful. If the string is *way off* when you start, the tuner may think you are trying to tune to a different pitch. Just be sure that when you play the string, the correct string name appears in the LED display; then, you can adjust the tuning peg accordingly.
7. You might notice that when you first pick the string, the needle on the tuner jumps sharp, then settles in at a slightly lower pitch as the note rings out. Disregard the initial attack and wait for the needle to "settle" before making your adjustments.
8. Now that the 1st string is in tune, repeat steps 1–7 for the remaining five strings. Below are the correct pitches for each string:
 - 1st string (closest to the floor): high E
 - 2nd string: B
 - 3rd string: G
 - 4th string: D
 - 5th string: A
 - 6th string (closest to the ceiling): low E