

Bass and Guitar Similarities

This lesson is taught on guitar but is the same for the bass except that the bass has 4 strings while the guitar has 6.

The 4 strings on the bass are the same notes as the top four strings on the guitar although a couple octaves lower,

- The 1st string on the bass equals the 3rd string on the guitar which is a G
- The 2nd string on the bass equals the 4th string on the guitar which is a D
- The 3rd string on the bass equals the 5th string on the guitar which is an A
- The 4th string on the bass equals the 6th string on the guitar which is an E

Sometimes the bass doesn't read properly on a guitar tuner, if you are having issues you should watch my video

"why you may be having trouble tuning your bass"

By not read properly I mean the reading bounces around

Why it is important to String and Tune properly

The reasons it is so important to string and tune your guitar properly include

- not damaging your guitar or bass
- your guitar will be more enjoyable to play with better sound
- strings lasting longer with less breakage
- you will stay in tune longer

The Parts of The Guitar

The parts of the guitar that you need to know to string and tune are

- the bridge and string holes on the bridge where you first put the string through, and saddles
- tuning pegs and peg string holes

- string tree
- the nut
- the neck and frets

Whenever I say fret a string I will mean press the string down between 2 frets,
open is to let the string ring without pressing it with your fretting hand

Quick Tips

Before starting stringing our guitars a quick couple of TIPS

:wash your hands before touching strings,

*the windings get gummed up with dirt and grime from dirty hands
and it dampens the sound.*

*:try not to accidentally kink the strings, if a string has a
kink it will break easier and not ring properly*

*:keep your nails trimmed, we want to build calluses not use our nails,
you may want to have finger nails later on for certain styles
but for now it's a good idea to keep them trimmed*

Changing The Strings

I cannot show you how to string a guitar

on this end the bridge end because there is

too many types of bridges, the string could be top mount,

bottom mount, in the bridge this way or that way,

or through a rail then over the bridge

So once you figure out how the string is mounted in your bridge

Let's move down to the headstock end, IF YOU ARE CHANGING THE

STRINGS AND CUT THEM LIKE I AM,

BE SURE TO LOOSEN THEM FIRST SO IT DOESN'T SNAP

AND HIT YOU IN THE FACE. The reason I cut them instead of pulling them through the bridge hole is that the wound up kinked end, the tuning peg end of the strings can be hard to pull through the bridge and cuts the fingers trying to yank the string through, if it is cut it has a nice straight end that slips easily through the bridge

Let's start with the 6th string, we always start with the 6th because it is the heaviest thickest string

after getting frustrated trying to get the string through this tiny tuning peg hole

you need to turn the tuner about a half turn so that

you can kink the string like this, then you want to hold the string

like this keeping the slack out while keeping the string up

and spaced out like this with your other hand as a guide

now turn in a tightening motion (usually clockwise) let the main part of the string

go over the top of the hole and over the string that went through the hole

for the first wind, then kink the excess upward like this,

hold it down and now make it go under the part of the string that went through the hole

and continue winding, keep the slack out of the string as much as possible

and keep it held down, and continue winding, this will make nice

tight and orderly windings that don't cross over each other

If the string winds over itself It could slip down into a

groove between other windings loosening it

If you happen to have locking tuners like this, it will turn at the back side winding up like a bolt and securing the string

All you have to do is pull it through leaving a touch of slack, and then tighten up the locker,

Remember to cut off the excess string don't leave it flopping around waiting to poke your eyeball out

Important To Know Before Tuning

First a quick explanation of what happens to the guitar when you are tuning, you will see why this is important in a moment,

When a string is tightened it pulls on the headstock and makes the neck bend slightly forward like this, when this happens it is loosening all of the other strings because the distance from the tuning peg to the bridge is less now, the opposite happens when you tune down.

So if you drastically change the tuning of the heavier strings like the 5th and 6th strings it will put all the other strings out of tune so it is important to get the heavier strings in tune first while adjusting the others and checking back with the heavier strings then the others, it will be a balancing game. This will be different on all guitars depending on how solid the neck and body are, whether the neck is bolted on or straight through style. If you have a tremolo (one of these) especially with a floating bridge which goes up or down these changes will be drastic because now it not only is pulling on the neck but it is pulling and fighting with the springs for the tremolo bar. The rule with balancing a floating bridge is

If the strings are all mostly higher than pitch you need to shoot a little lower than pitch on your heavy strings the

5th and 6th strings because when we lower all the other strings it will tighten the 6th and 5th strings,

If the majority of the strings are lower than pitch then do the opposite and shoot a little higher than pitch with your heavy strings because now the opposite happens and when we tighten those other strings they will loosen the heavy ones.

It's a balancing game, just keep playing with it keeping my tips in mind and eventually balancing your guitar will just

be a normal part of tuning

Another factor is the gauge of your strings, heavier gauge strings pull harder than light gauge. When a string is thinner it needs less tension to equal the same note as a heavy gauge string.

String gauge is all preference, lighter strings like 9s are easier to play than a heavier gauge like 10s or 11s but have a thinner shriller sound than the heavy gauge which have a thicker richer sound but are much harder to press and hold down. I would recommend light gauge for absolute beginners unless you have really strong fingers.

I personally use light gauge 9s with light tops, I have 42 on the top. I don't notice enough difference in tone to be worth the extra work, I have always had some arthritis in my hands and heavy gauge can be really painful sometimes.

How To Tune

I am going to show you Standard E tuning it is the most common tuning THE NOTES are E,A,D,G,B,E

Starting with the thickest string give it a pluck to see where you are at, if it is too far out of tune it may not register or might give strange erratic readings, you will have to guess if it is too high or too low.

If you are tuning with a new set of strings for the first time you want to tighten each one slowly until there is tension and it starts reading on the tuner, keep tightening until you are close to pitch. Give all the strings a good tug a few times they need to be stretched for the 1st use. Repeat this process of tugging and tightening until it doesn't lower in pitch after tugging, this is how you know it is properly stretched when the pitch stays the same after tugging fairly hard on the string

Assuming your strings are on now and stretched,

the 6th string is an E, if it reads lower than E which would be anywhere in the range of from roughly D to D#, any lower than a C and your tuner will likely not register. So if it is a C or a C# any lower than a E tighten upward and take your time

If it is registering as anything above E so E# or F on so on then tune down and go past the E slightly lower by a couple notches then come back up and settle on E

You always want to finish tuning any string by tightening never loosening because there can be slack in the tuner if you are loosening and when you tighten you eliminate the slack, this will keep your guitar in tune, if you end in a downward wind it will loosen after playing for a short while

And always give the string a tug then recheck it for the same reason to eliminate any potential slack, I guarantee if you tune the string perfectly and give it a tug it will loosen

slightly so if you bend a string while playing or every time you press a note or pluck a string you are pulling on it so if you haven't done a tug test your guitar will not stay in tune

Now let's repeat the process for the other 5 strings

The 5th string is an A,

the 4th string is D,

the 3rd string is a G,

the 2nd string is a B, and

the 1st string is an E 2 octaves higher than the 6th string E.

If you don't understand what an octave is don't worry that is coming up soon in a future lesson

Now go back to the 6th string, it has probably changed due to the issues I previously mentioned

Repeat the process through all the strings as many times as it takes

Tugging and always ending in a tightening motion for your final tune before moving on to the next string

If you have a floating bridge on your guitar be patient

Now you are tuned to Standard E

And that's it

you've now learned the names of the strings

and how to tune your guitar safely and correctly

in standard E tuning.

How to deal with common tuning issues

Great work today.

Tuning is one of the most important habits in music

and you're already building it.

When you're ready,

head over to **Lesson 2**,
where we'll learn the parts of the guitar
and how to hold it comfortably
so you can play with confidence.
Thanks for joining me —
I'll see you in the next lesson.