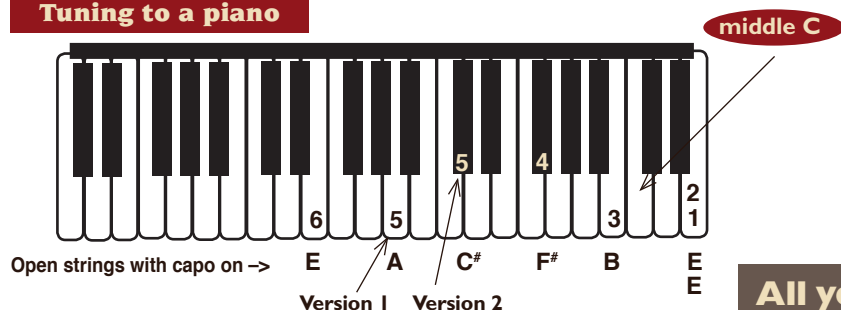


Putting Your Guitar Into Liberty Tuning

Tuning to a piano



It's generally better to tune with the capo on. Only the 5th string is different between **Liberty Capo Version 1** and **Version 2**.

Without the capo, the 2nd string is tuned to Middle C.

All you do is tune the B string up one fret to C. It's that simple.

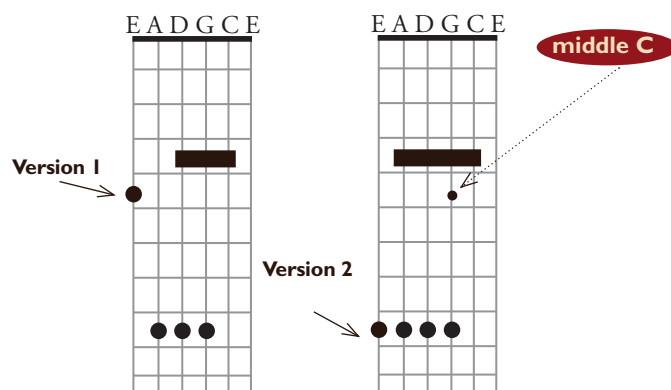
Tuning by ear

1) Put the *Liberty Capo* on at fret 4, either in *Version 1*, which covers strings 2-3-4, or *Version 2*, that covers all 4 middle strings. Make sure the capo is about 3/4 of the way to the next fret so it clamps properly, and make sure it does not push the strings out of position. Take a quick look and make sure the strings are still in their proper place, then play each of the strings clamped by the capo to make sure they all make a clear sound.

2) Tune the 2nd string (2nd thinnest) up until it is the same pitch as the 1st string (thinnest.) You should be able to do this by ear, and if the guitar was already in standard tuning, you're done. It only takes a few seconds. The note goes up one fret from Eb to E.

Tuning the guitar to itself

If one of the strings is close to being correct and you are not playing with other tuned instruments, you can just put the guitar into "relative" tune. The top 2 strings are unison E notes, and the bass string is also an E, so it's easy to get at least 3 strings in tune. The dots show where to fret each string so it gives the pitch of the next higher one.



Tuning with a tuner

If the guitar is close to being in tune, it's easy to use an electronic tuner or a phone app. (Make sure your app is "smart" and doesn't just give the 6 standard tuning pitches. We like *ClearTune*.) Always tune the strings, with the capo on, to **E-A-F#-B-E-E** in *Version 1* or **E-C#-F#-B-E-E** in *Version 2*. **The chart on the previous page shows how to tune when you use 2 capos.**

It can be very tricky to tune an extremely out-of-tune guitar with an electronic tuner, especially figuring out whether a string is too high or too low. You can turn the knob the wrong direction and either break a string trying to tune a string way too high, or end up an octave (12 frets) too low.

Tuning your guitar low

If you have a baritone or long-scale guitar, or even if you tune a normal guitar down 2 frets, then you can play in *Liberty Tuning* in E and sound in D. D is an important key for men, women & children to sing, and to back up other instruments like the fiddle or mandolin. It will behave better if you use medium and not light-gauge strings.

When you switch from one configuration of a partial capo to another, or add or remove any capo, you will probably have to slightly re-adjust the tuning of some of the strings. This is normal.

If your guitar sounds OK to you, that's good enough. If someone complains that it is not in tune, then have them help you tune it.

About Tuning

Unless we are pop stars who have people to tune guitars for us, we will spend time tuning. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Some guitars stay in tune better than others.**
- **Steel strings stay in tune better than nylon strings.**
- **Many things will put us out of tune:**

If the strings are too high up off the fingerboard This is called the guitar *action*. It's common when guitars sit around with tension on the strings for them to pull the neck a little, which raises up the strings so that pressing them down stretches them a little. In summer the action comes up, and in low humidity of winter it will go down. Most guitars now are adjustable with a threaded *truss rod* in the neck. (Be careful or get help for this.)

Cheap or improperly-made guitars The neck, top, bridge, saddle & frets all have to be made and positioned very carefully for each string to produce good pitches. Newer guitars are much better, and even pretty inexpensive instruments now play pretty well in tune. If you try to use your grandfather's guitar it might not work right even if it is a pretty good brand. *Liberty Guitar* requires pretty good intonation, since we use more of the frets than most beginner methods.

Capos Yes, capos stretch the strings a little, though *Liberty* capos work better than others. Clamping them too tight makes it worse. And when we move the capo it generally throws us off a little (not always), which is the only drawback to the *Liberty Guitar* method.

Temperature & humidity Heat or cold, sun, campfires, cool breezes, body heat... The metal, plastic and wood parts of the guitar absorb and release humidity, and expand or contract with temperature at different rates.

New strings They stretch. (You can learn how to "pre-stretch" them.) New nylon strings usually take at least a day or two to settle down. Steel strings might take an hour or so.

Old strings Strings go "dead," and they go "sour" and might produce slightly out of tune notes some places. It's hard to be sure when this is your problem without replacing a string.

Strings not attached properly A string, especially a "plain" string that doesn't have metal winding wrapped around it, can slip at either end where it is attached.

Malfunctioning tuning machines on guitar It never hurts to check if the little screws on the tuning pegs are loose. It's not a big deal to buy and replace tuners either. Sometimes they last decades.

- **If you can't tell you're out of tune, it might not matter...** If there's no one there to complain, why worry?
- **If someone complains that you are out of tune, have them help you.**
- **Get a smartphone app.** There are cell phone apps now that are great electronic tuners. We used to have to buy a \$25-75 electronic tuner and carry it around and change its batteries. Make sure you get a *chromatic* tuner or app, since you'll be tuning notes to more than just the standard 6 guitar strings.
- **Some day, perhaps when our cars drive themselves, our guitars will tune themselves too...**