

An Orchestra Student's

Beginners Guide to Tuning - BASS

What does "my instrument is out of tune" mean?

The pitch(s) of the string(s) are either too high or too low. If a pitch is too high, it is SHARP. If it is too low, then it is FLAT.

Why do string instruments go out of tune?

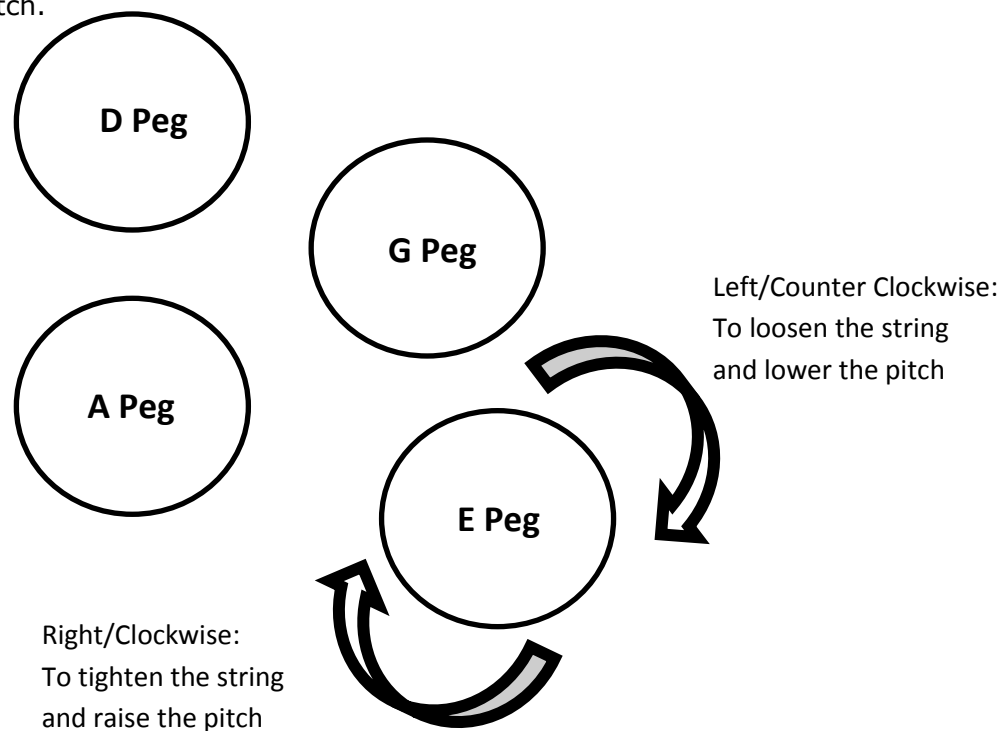
- Temperature and humidity. Wooden string instruments expand if it's hot and contract if it's cold. The strings will expand (causing them to go sharp) or contract (causing them to go flat) to accommodate the changing instrument size. String instruments have the most trouble staying in tune when it is very cold.
- Strings naturally stretch out. Even if an instrument stays in the same temperature, overtime (even during the day), strings stretch like a rubber band (but not as quickly). As the strings stretch, the pitch becomes lower (flat). This is why strings do not last forever; they eventually stretch out too much and start fraying, snap, or become false.
- If it's bumped into something or dropped.
- Note: new strings go out of tune quickly. This usually only lasts a few days before they are "broken in."

Orchestra Class Tuning

- It is VERY IMPORTANT to never talk while the class is tuning.
- You should only play when it is your turn to tune. When it is your turn, you must play only the open string that the tuner is playing.
- If you do not follow the rules above you could lose participation points.
- Order of tuning: bass A D G E
cello A D G C
violin/viola A D G C (vla only) E (vln only)

How to Tune

- Tune in normal playing position with the bow.
- If there is more than one bass player in the class, take turns tuning each pitch, especially for 6th grade. The pitch is so low it's often hard to hear.
- Basses do NOT have fine tuners. Tune using the pegs (which are very different from violin, viola, & cello pegs because they are gears – you will not break a string by turning the pegs).
- Listen to the pitch on the tuner for 3 seconds before trying to tune.
- If it sounds out of tune, lower the pitch and tune slowly up to the desired pitch.
- When tuning, bow the note continuously, listening carefully to the string as it tightens toward the pitch on the tuner. If you do not play the note as you are tuning, you could go past the pitch.



- Once you think it is tune, stop playing. If it is so out of tune that you know you cannot tune it yourself, stop playing. After everyone has tried to tune, Mrs. Rosenberg will tune those who don't think they got their instrument in tune.
- **If you have a home bass, Mrs. Rosenberg has already supplied you with a loaner tuner. Feel free to bring it in at any point to get it tuned by, however.** You can also go to a music store (call first though to make sure a string specialist is available) to have a someone tune it.

An Orchestra Student's

Beginners Guide to Tuning – **VIOLIN/VIOLA/CELLO**

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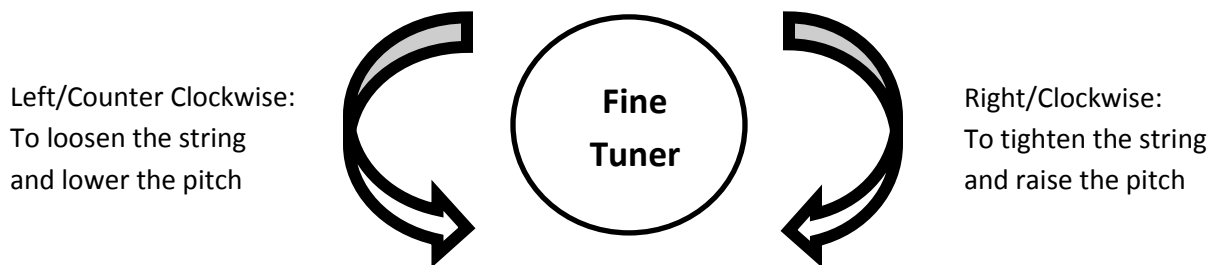
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Orchestra Class Tuning

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- If you do not follow the rules above you could lose participation points.
- Order of tuning: bass A D G E
cello A D G C
violin/viola A D G C (vla only) E (vln only)

How to Tune

- Set the bow down and turn the instruments around so that the fine tuners are facing you. *There is a more advanced way you will learn later.*
- The fine tuners are used for tuning the note if it is a little out of tune.
- The pegs are used to tune if the string is very out of tune. Beginner tuners (except bass players) are advised ***NOT*** to tune with the pegs to avoid unnecessary string breakage.
- Listen to the pitch on the tuner for 3 seconds before trying to tune.
- Pluck the open string with a left finger while turning the fine tuners with right thumb & 1st finger.
- When tuning, pluck the note continuously, listening carefully to the string as it tightens or loosens toward the pitch on the tuner. If you do not play the note as you are tuning, you could go past the pitch.
- **RIGHTY-TIGHTY (clockwise).....LEFTY-LOOSEY (counter clockwise)**



- Once you think it is tune, stop playing. If it is so out of tune that you know you cannot tune it yourself, stop playing. After everyone has tried to tune, Mrs. Rosenberg will tune those who don't think they got their instrument in tune.
- If you have turned a fine tuner all the way down (righty-tighty), and it cannot turn down any further, turn the fine tuner back up as far as it will go (lefty-loosey) *without it falling out*. Then Mrs. Rosenberg will tune it using the peg first, and then the fine tuner.
- **I HIGHLY RECOMMEND getting a tuner for home that will listen to the pitch and tell you if it is sharp, flat, or in tune.** It will especially be helpful for long breaks. Turn the pegs at your OWN RISK. You can go to a music store (call first though to make sure a string specialist is available) to have someone turn the pegs over long breaks.