

# APPENDIX

## TUNING YOUR HARP

Learning to tune your harp is an important part of learning to play, and it is essential that you keep your harp in tune by tuning it daily. New harps go out of tune quickly, because all of the strings are new and still stretching. Changes in temperature and humidity will also cause the strings to go out of tune. So, you should tune your harp every day before you sit down to play.

You should have received a tuning key, also called a tuning wrench, with your harp. Here's a photo of a variety of keys used by different harpmakers. Be sure to use the correct size key that fits your harp's tuning pins.



You can tune your harp to the notes on a piano or a pitch pipe. However, the easiest way to tune is with the help of a chromatic electronic tuner, which you can purchase from a harp store or other music store. When using an electronic tuner, you don't have to have a good "ear"; the tuner will tell you when a string is at the correct pitch. Follow the instructions that come with your electronic tuner. If you need more help, you'll find some tuner demonstrations at [www.harpcenter.com](http://www.harpcenter.com).

Don't be surprised if you get frustrated when you're first learning to tune. It takes time to get a feel for which tuning pin is which, and how far you need to turn the tuning key. But, fortunately, the more you tune your harp, the faster you'll get! Just like learning to play your harp, learning to tune takes practice. Every time you tune you'll be a little bit quicker and more efficient, and soon you'll be tuning like a pro!

### TUNING BASICS

Hold your tuning key in your right hand, and place it on the square end of the tuning pin for the string you are going to tune. Be sure the tuning key is on the correct pin, or you will tend to break strings by tightening them too much.

Pluck the string with your left hand. While it is still sounding, turn the tuning key until the electronic tuner indicates that the string is in tune. Or, if you are tuning to a piano, turn the tuning key until the pitch of the string matches the same pitch on the piano.

Some harps have zither pins, which are tuning pins that do not go through both sides of the neck of the harp, but are screwed into the neck on the side where the strings are attached. If your harp has zither pins, you might find it easiest to tune with the harp turned around backwards, with the front pillar towards you. Then you can hold the tuning key in your right hand and pluck the string with your left hand, as you would with harps with other types of tuning pins.

### TUNING A NEW HARP

When tuning a new harp, or one that is not tuned up to pitch, always tune the lowest string first and then tune the strings consecutively all the way to the top. This allows the soundboard to adjust to the tension of the strings. After you have tuned all of the strings, start again at the bottom and repeat the whole process. This will need to be done quite a few times on a new harp before the strings stretch and adjust to their pitches.