

Great guitar tuner apps for Android Smartphones and Tablets

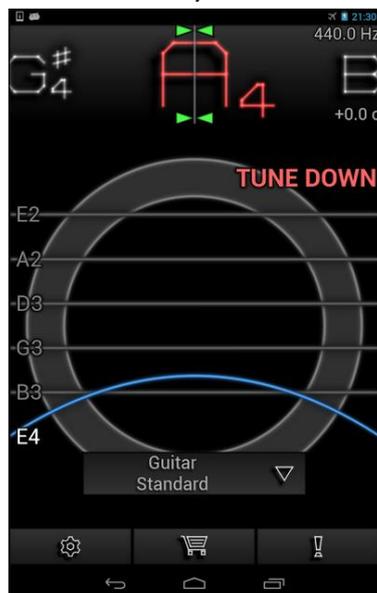
By Christopher Peppler



I have used and evaluated no less than seventeen Android tuner applications and have found most of them wanting in one or more vital areas like accuracy, ease of use, clarity, and so on. However, there are a few exceptions, which are well worth using and passing on. This short article covers my personal top five.

The best of the best tuning apps– Pitchlab Pro

Let me start with my all-time favourite guitar tuning application, [PitchLab Pro](#). I have been using this application for two years and no matter what new apps I try out, I always come back to this one. It shows the name of the nearest note, the Hz reading of the note you are playing, and the difference in cents from perfect pitch. It also has visual cues to show when you are in tune and whether you have to tune up or down. It is very accurate and will also register notes a full octave higher than the open strings allowing you to check intonation at the 12th fret.



I seldom use the other screens available but here they are:

Stage Tuner: A large, clear tuning display, optimized for hands-free operation at a distance incorporating a true radial and waterfall strobe for fine-tuning accuracy and responsiveness.

Chord Matrix: Grid-based estimation display of common chord types (maj/min, maj7/min7, dom7/dim7), ideal for quickly determining chords for a tune.

Pitch Spectrogram: Scrolling display of live sound analysis, showing the perceived pitch of a wide range of sound types.

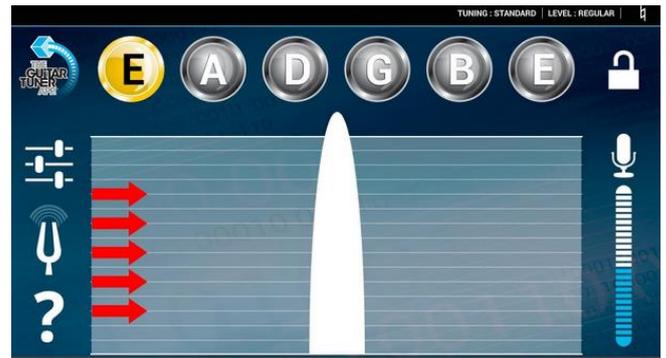
Tone Generator: An 8-octave, polyphonic keyboard display that enables you to play reference notes in the musical scale. Includes a selection of tone waveform types and the ability to quickly switch between single-note or multi-note mode.

Strobe Tuner: A true 6-band, multi-mode strobe display combined with a chromatic ribbon tuner for rapid and accurate instrument tuning.

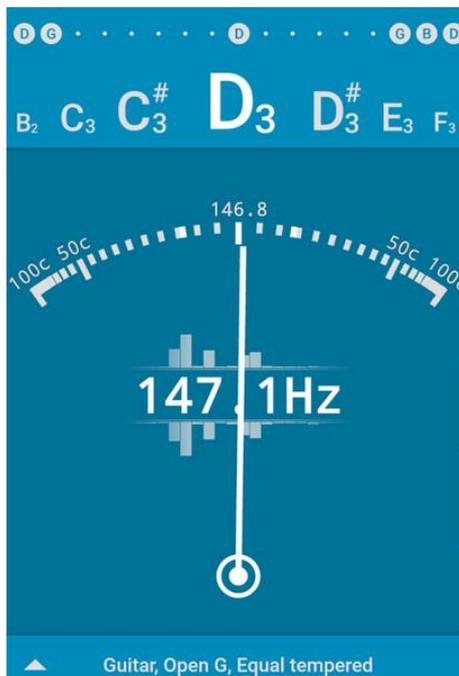
Split Screen: Split the screen and use any two tuning views at the same time.

The most useful app for tuning up new strings

The other tuner that I use from time to time, particularly when I am changing strings, is [GuitarLab Tuner](#). This is an excellent application that has two unique features. Not only does it allow you to lock onto one particular string (6th String E in the illustration, but it displays arrows indicating how far you are from fine-tuning range. In the illustration the arrows show that the note being played is way too low. If the note played was far too high then arrows would appear to the right of the display. This is a very useful application when fitting new strings. The other great feature is the 'Smart' mode which averages the inputs through the mic and applies an algorithm that displays a stable reading of the note you are playing. The note displayed does not therefore decay or waver as is common when tuning the higher strings. This mode is a little slow because of the computer processing required but it is quite useful.



An oldie but goodie tuning app reborn



A tuner that has been around for a long time is [gStrings](#). It was replaced for a while with Waves tuner but it was then reworked from scratch and is now a very accurate and easy to use application. Two things I particularly like are the big analogue-type display, and the fact that it displays the Hz reading of the note you are playing as well as the frequency of the note you are trying to achieve. In the illustration, the note is D at 146.8 Hz shown just above the needle and the string being plucked is in a little too high at 147.1 Hz. This application also registers notes played at the 12th fret and so allows you to check your intonation.

A quick and easy app for any tuning occasion

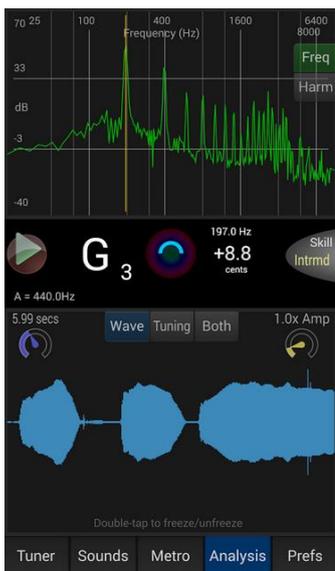
Another old favourite among guitarists is [Guitar Tuna](#). This application has a big and clear display and both a visual and an audio signal when you are in tune. It is fast and accurate, and well suited to a quick tune-up on the fly. Like several other applications of this type, it includes a chord library and a metronome.

The display combines some helpful elements that make tuning a breeze. However, its developers claim more for it than just simplicity of use. According to them it contains 'award winning audio technology':

- Built on the world's most advanced audio recognition algorithm - the same technology powering Yousician
- Professional accuracy for advanced players
- Auto mode tuner (for super fast tuning, hands-free, string by string)'.



One for the sound engineers among us



One other tuning application that warrants a mention is [TE Tuner](#). Its main screen is different to the usual analogue-type displays, but does provide all the information needed to bring each string to pitch. It incorporates a metronome, but its main contribution is the display showing an analysis of frequency and harmonic energy, along with a scrolling waveform display. This is why TE in its name stands for 'tonal energy'. I don't find much use for this but it is available for those who want to take tuning to a more technical and detailed level.

The two I use over and over again

Every time I put new strings on a guitar, or retune after maintenance I use GuitarLab Tuner and almost every time I sit down to practice I use PitchLab Pro. I have always found these two apps to be accurate, easy to use, and very helpful... and no, I am not sponsored by the developers ☺