

TUNE-UP AND MAINTENANCE

[You have a section with VIDEOS in my website.](#)

Do not hesitate to refer to it.

You will have accurate instructions there.

TUNE-UP

If you want to walk a long way with your instrument, take care of it.

Your instrument is like you:

It doesn't bear the sudden changes of temperature.

It doesn't like the rain.

It hates long exposures under the Sun light.

Hits and falls disturb it.

It likes to be pampered, protected and checked.

Wood maintenance:

Your string drum has been pad varnished.

If it has some dust, rub a dry cloth over it.

If it is wet, dry it with a cloth as soon as possible and let it dry far from heat sources.

If it has a (liquid) stain, use a specific product for wood stains.

STRINGS and TUNING

TUNING:

Choose the best tuning for your repertoire or your instrument

STRINGS:

Your instrument is delivered with nylon strings

You can also choose:

gut strings (ask for budget)

synthetic fibre / Savarez Alliance (ask for budget)

HOW TO CHANGE A STRING

1. Turn the tuning mechanism near the opening, as close as possible
2. Make go the string on the front side of the instrument (it's easier...)
3. Pass the string through the mechanism hole and make a knot, for the thickest diameters you'll have to make a ball with the fire of a lighter (allow to cool)
4. **Turn the tuning mechanism as deep as possible**
5. Pass the string under the staple (metal piece of the top bridge)
6. Pass through the boxwood peg and make a knot
7. Cut the surplus string
8. Strecht the peg a tone over, because the string tone will go down on its own
9. When tension is steady, tune the string with the bottom mechanism
10. Tune up the staples

«TURN TO THE LEFT»

« T » KEY: TURN TO THE LEFT.

You have a «T» shape key to tune your string drum.

To tune with the traditional boxwood pegs on the top side, use the «U» shape end of the key. You will use the other end, « 6 sides key / allen wrench» to the fine tuning (hidden mechanism on the bottom backside)



NORMAL TUNING

RULE N°1

You should keep your instrument always with the correct tension to maintain the tuning. This is the essential condition to keep it steady in order to use it with the highest satisfaction and reliability.

FOR REGULAR TUNING

If you usually keep your instrument with tension, it will be enough to tune it with the bottom backside mechanism and you will rarely have to use the boxwood pegs.

FOR AN IMPORTANT TUNING

- 1) With the « U » shape side of the key make a **first approximate tuning** using the «traditional» keys.
- 2) With the «6 side allen wrench» **finish tuning** using the bottom backside mechanism.

MECHANIC SYSTEM

From time to time you will have to **put in place the mechanic tuning system** that is hidden under the trap door on the bottom backside. This will happen when it arrives at the end of its walk. You shouldn't arrive at the end (to stretch and to loosen) in order to take advantage of the system.

NEVER FORCE THE MECHANISM

If you notice any resistance or you see that the nut stands above the metal block, you have reached the end. You must tune up using the pegs. I recommend you to let the nut in the middle of the block to tune up and down.

MARGIN OF STRING TENSION

The instrument is delivered tuned in G (G — D / key note — dominant) except in case you have requested another tuning. However, you can change the tuning ***without having to change the strings***. The thick string can be tuned till C, and the thin string can arrive till G.

This allows you all these possibilities :

Thick string	Thin string	
G	D	
G	G	(octave)
A	E	
C	G	
C	F	
ETC.		

The tuning I've indicated (key note – dominant) is the traditional one of mi region, but I've tried many different possibilities depending on the effect I was searching for.

If you want to change the tuning, you must preview a time for the strings to stabilize. It can vary depending on the distance between the old and new tuning (three or four days with intermediate tuning).

PEGS

If the peg is too hard to move and screech when you try to turn it:

Rub the part inside the pegbox with graphite (pencil).
It will turn easier.

If the peg tends to slip or jump:

At the beginning the pegs may tend to « jump ».

Rub with a piece of chalk if they slip too easily
It may happen specially when the instrument is new.
if it jump: Hit softly on the peg (with a small hammer or something similar).
The peg will go to its position. Don't insist on it too much. You may cause a fissure in the pegbox.

«STAPLES»

Staples are small metal bridges placed over the strings on the top of the string drum. They produce a continuous sound called « stridulation ». Without the stridulation the sound of the string drum is « poor ». Thanks to it the sound is «gracefully» and produce the effect of a bourdon.

TUNE-UP OF THE « STRIDULATION »

« STRIDULATION » :

Continuous sound (frizzle) produced by the contact of the vibrating strings with the stapes something like BZZZ ! BZZZ !.....).

Its objective is to strenghten and maintain the continuity of the sound (bourdon).

This characteristic can be found in many African and Indian instruments.

The adjustment depends on your needs:

The adjustment is very accurate and fine, specially in the last small hits.

- * Hit slightly on the stable (with a small hammer or the tuning key to push it deeper.
- * Pull it out slightly with the help of a screwdriver or a nail, or even better with small pliers.

You can remove the stridulation of one string or even more if you like so, reducing the effect and changing the general sound of your instruments.

MOBILE BRIDGE

The **mobile bridge system** allows you to change the chord without having to modify the tension of the strings (for example, from G to A).

For the «modulation» model I provide two mobile bridges that allow four chord combinations. Other possibilities can be studied depending on your needs.

Be careful. You could scratch the front of your string drum, although it would be only a aesthetic problem that wouldn't affect the sound.

To avoid it, you only have to lift the bridge a little bit when you place it on the front. The bridge has some leather protections in order to reduce this risk.

The bridge shouldn't be placed too long to avoid the scratches. If possible, remove it after each use.

FAQ

Some liquid felt over my string drum

Dry it as soon as possible (be careful with the rose windows) and let it in a not very hot environment.

Right away, use a specific product to remove stains from wood.

I have to change a string

Have a look at «How to change a string» in this document.

A string is broken

See preceding answer.

I left my instrument too long under exposed to Sun light and the front is unglued.

It can be repaired.

Call me.

A rose window is damaged.

Try too recover as many pieces as possible and call me. I'll try to repair it.

In the worst-case scenario I'll have to replace it

I've lost an accesory (pimbo / staple/ mobile bridge / tuning key...)

Call me.

I have no sound system in my instrument, but I have change my opinion.

It can be done.

Call me.

I have a string drum of one chord and would like to turn it into a «modulation» mode.

I'm sorry. It's impossible

I have a «modulation» model and would like to turn it into a «tradition» model.

No problem.

Call me.

My staples don't work well.

This operation should be done usually and calmly.
To adjust the staples:

1. Put your instrument on a surface
2. Take a tool, such as a screwdriver or some pliers, and extract the staple just a little bit.
3. With the help of a small hammer hit softly on the staple, while you are playing the string.
4. Stop when you get the appropriate sound.

See the « staples » section in this document.

The tuning of my string drum isn't steady

The regular maintenance of the instrument is necessary.

If you are constant, your string drum will be steady.

Having to tune your instrument often is not pleasant.

Have a look at the tuning section.

I want to change the chord of my string drum.

Preventing is better than having surprises (unsteady chords).

The strings have memory and they tend to recover their old tension.

If you only change a tone...

- o There's no problem

If you change more than a tone...

- o Preview two or three days for the instrument to accept the new chord and to become steady.

If the change is radical...

- o Perhaps you'll have to change the diameter of the strings (Call me).

Does my instrument tolerate temperature changes?

Avoid them...

**I've problems with the
pegs:
they jump or screech...**

See the «pegs» section.

**One of the screws of the
tuning mechanic system
ise blocked.**

Above all, don't insist and look at the
stuning section.

**I usually play the string
drum walking for a
long time**

If you want, I'll put to strips of leather
for free. Like that you'll be able to
carry it over the shoulder.

**I'd like to replace the
nylon strings with
other king of strings.**

No problem.
You can choose:
Gut stringso (ask for budget).
Synthetic fibre strings Savarez Alliance
(ask for budget)