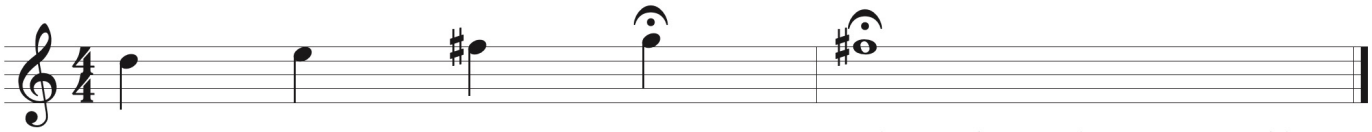
Alto Saxophone

Basic Tuning Rules

1. *Make sure you have warmed up for at least 5 minutes before tuning.*
2. *Use your best embouchure and make sure you play with your best tone quality.*
3. *Play your tuning note at a mezzo forte dynamic level.*
4. *Do not use any vibrato while tuning.*
5. *Do not try to fix the tuning note by adjusting with your air or embouchure. Adjust the mouthpiece until it is in tune.*

Best Tuning Notes



Approach the G by walking up the scale to help center the pitch.

F# is your best tuning note. Use this when tuning alone or with other woodwind instruments.

How to Tune the Saxophone

The saxophone is tuned by adjusting how far the mouthpiece is pushed onto the neck. If you are sharp, pull it out more; if you are flat, push it in more.

* *The embouchure and tongue position can make a big difference in the tuning of the saxophone. Check the pitch produced on the mouthpiece by itself to see if your embouchure is too tight or too loose.*

- *Alto Saxophone: Should produce a concert A on the mouthpiece alone.*
- *Tenor Saxophone: Should produce a concert G on the mouthpiece alone.*
- *Bari Saxophone: Should produce a concert D on the mouthpiece alone.*

How to Adjust for Other Notes

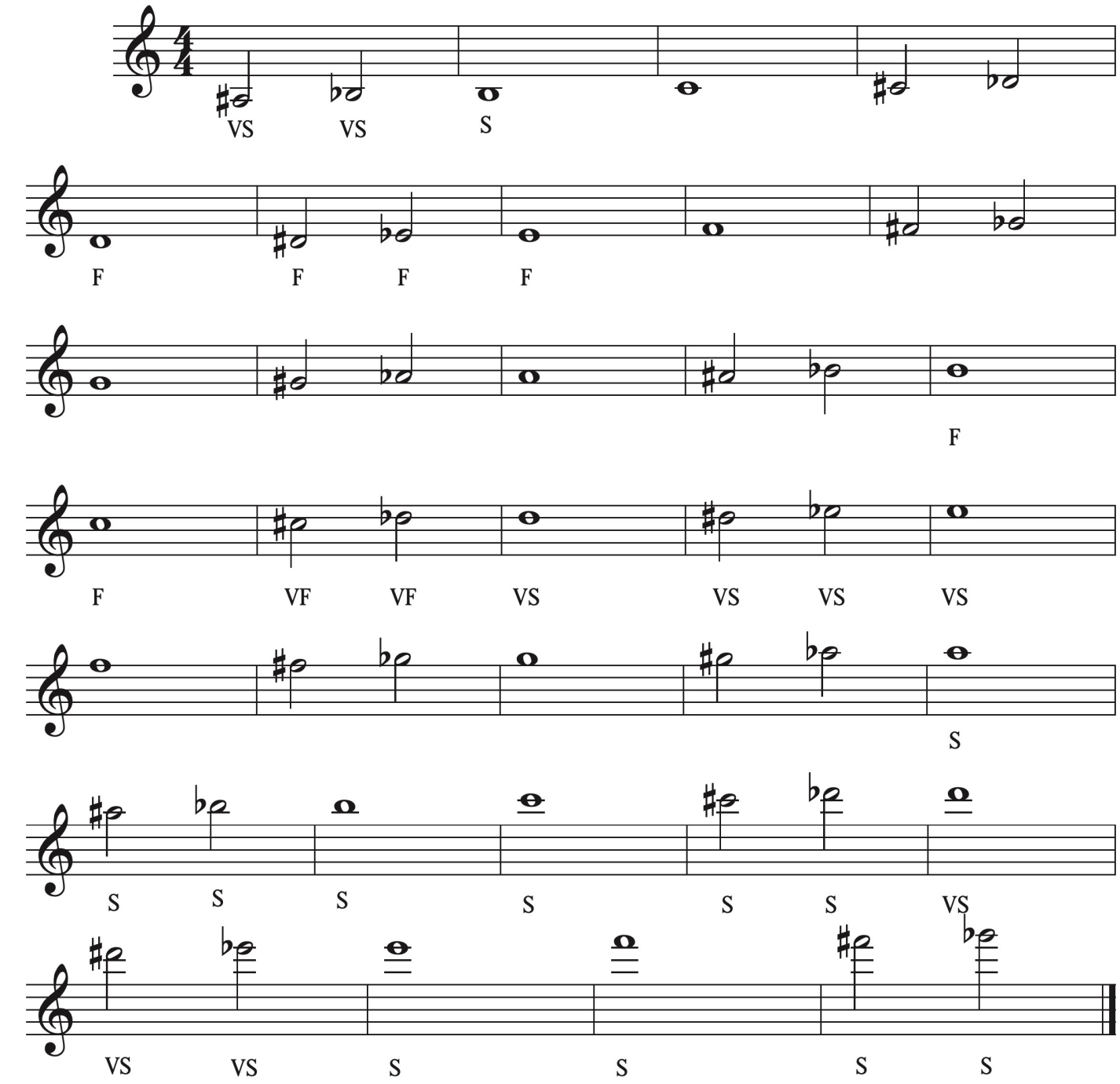
Unfortunately, after tuning your instrument, there will still be some notes that will need to be adjusted to be in tune. Use these guidelines to help you if you come across an out of tune note:

1. If you are sharp - relax the embouchure.
2. If you are flat - firm up the embouchure.
3. If you are playing loud - crescendos have a tendency to play flat.
4. If you are playing soft - decrescendos have a tendency to play sharp.
5. Reeds that are new or too hard tend to play sharp.
6. Reeds that are old or too soft tend to play flat.

Alto Saxophone Pitch Tendencies

Abbreviations

VF - Very Flat F - Flat S - Sharp VS - Very Sharp



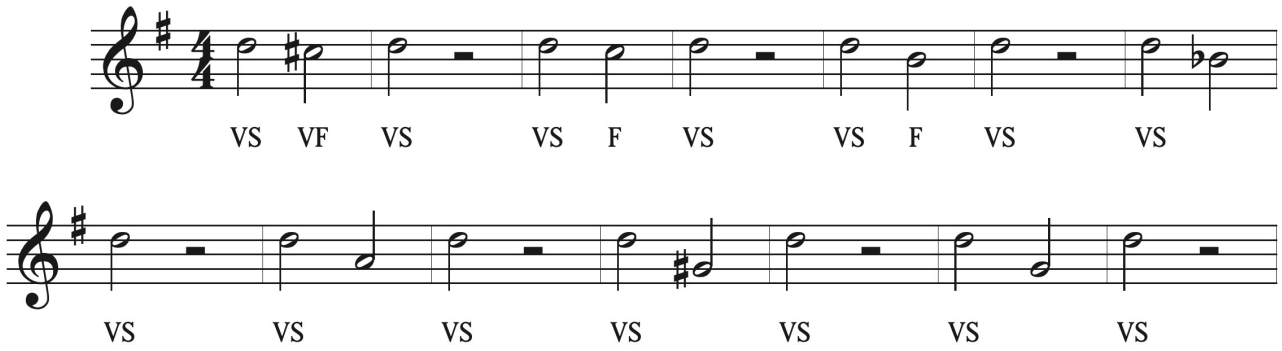
While these pitch tendencies are common for most saxophones, each individual instrument can vary. It is important to spend time with a tuner on your own instrument to learn its unique characteristics.

Alto Saxophone Warmups

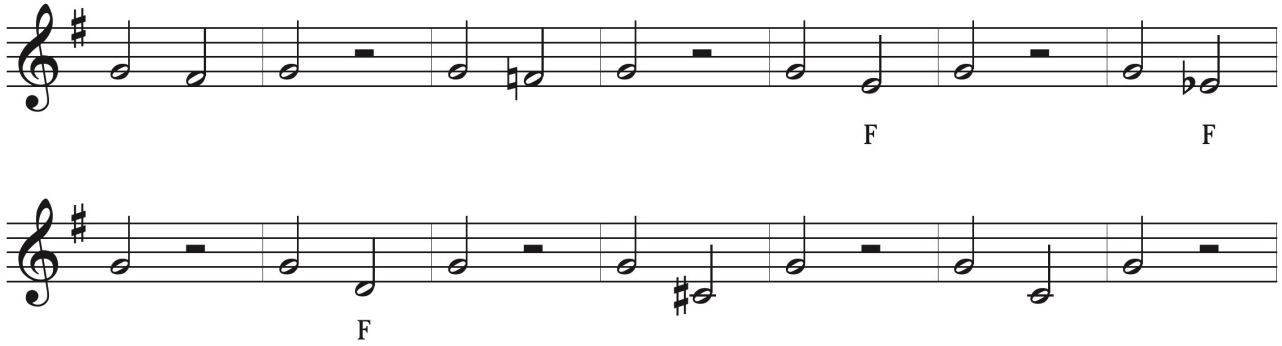
Abbreviations

VF - Very Flat F - Flat S - Sharp VS - Very Sharp

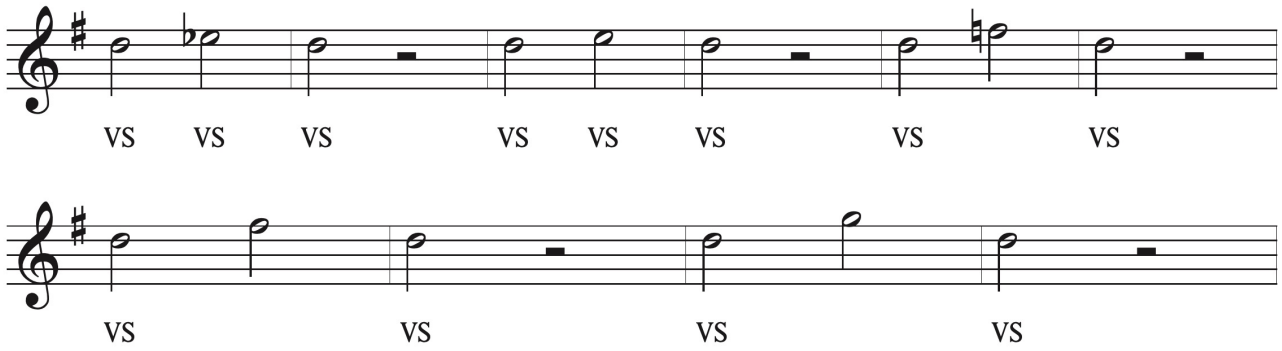
Long Tone 1a



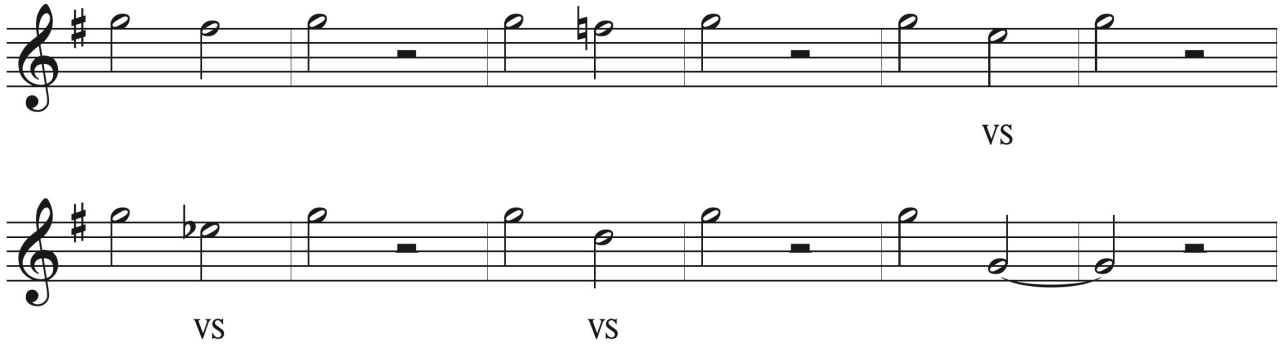
Long Tone 1b



Long Tone 1c



Long Tone 1d

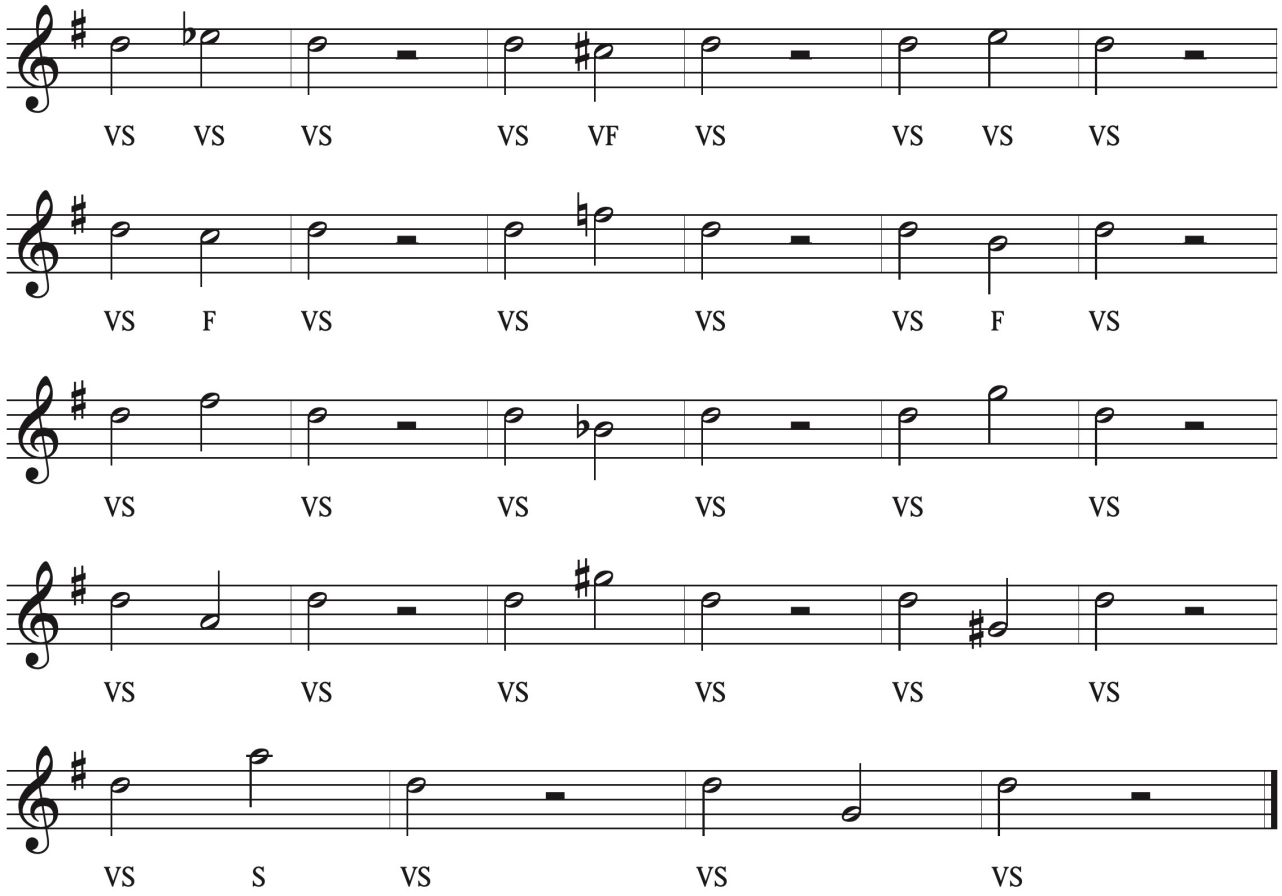


Alto Saxophone Warmups

Abbreviations

VF - Very Flat F - Flat S - Sharp VS - Very Sharp

Long Tone 3a

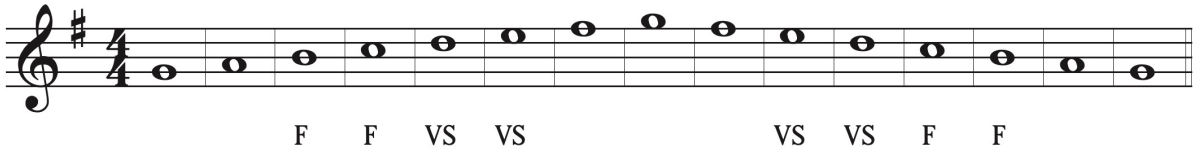


Alto Saxophone Major Scales

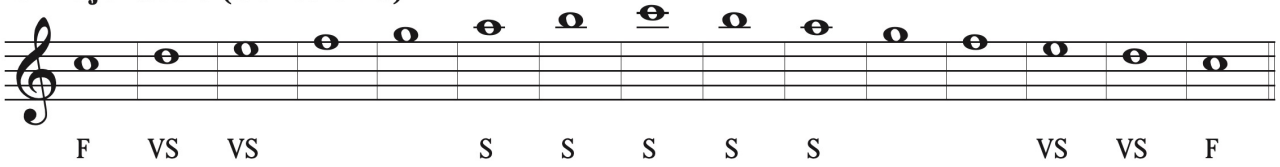
Abbreviations

VF - Very Flat F - Flat S - Sharp VS - Very Sharp

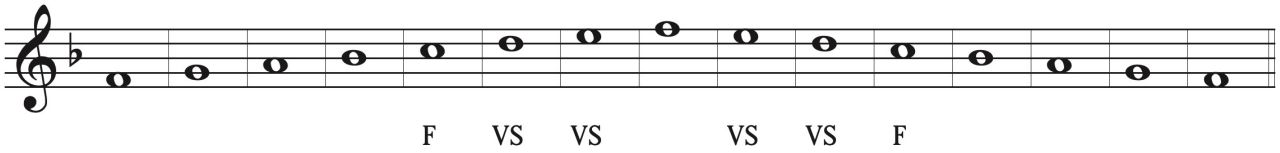
G Major Scale (Concert Bb)



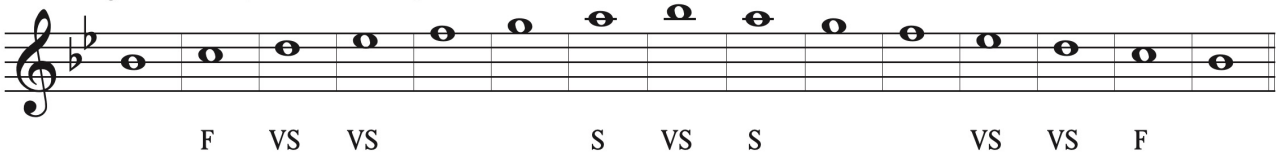
C Major Scale (Concert Eb)



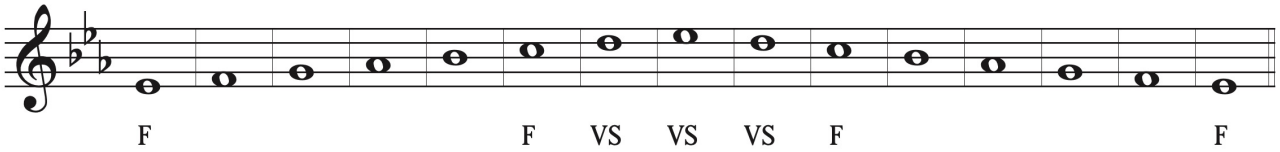
F Major Scale (Concert Ab)



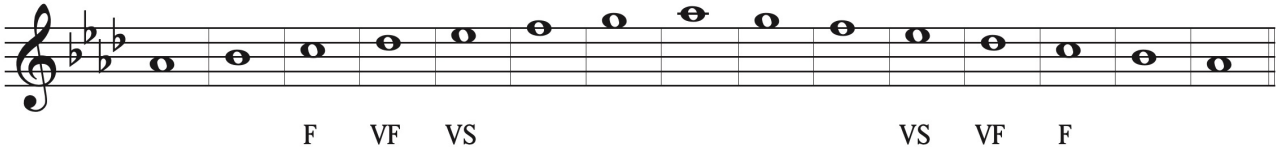
Bb Major Scale (Concert Db)



Eb Major Scale (Concert Gb)



Ab Major Scale (Concert B)

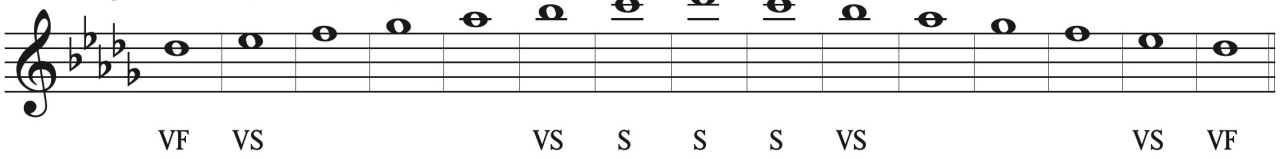


Alto Saxophone Major Scales

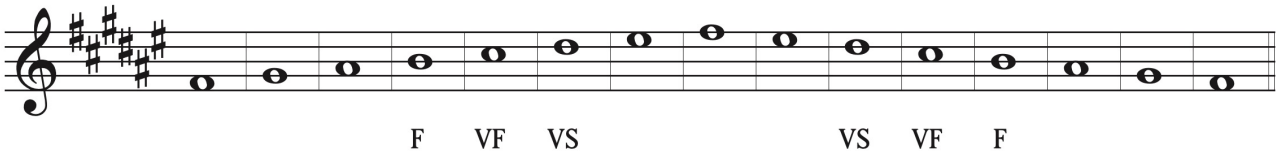
Abbreviations

VF - Very Flat F - Flat S - Sharp VS - Very Sharp

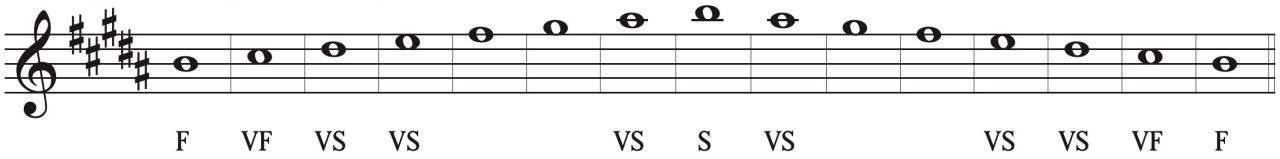
Db Major Scale (Concert E)



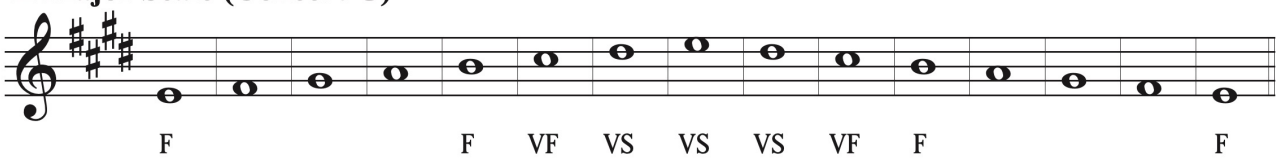
F# Major Scale (Concert A)



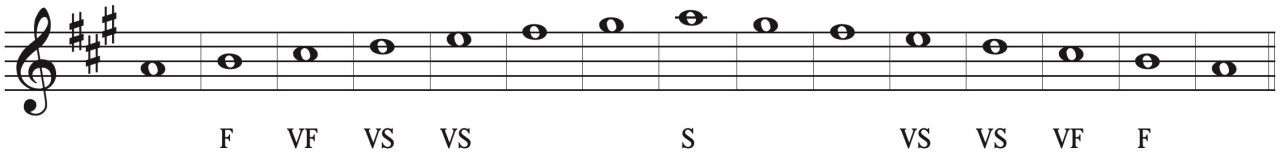
B Major Scale (Concert D)



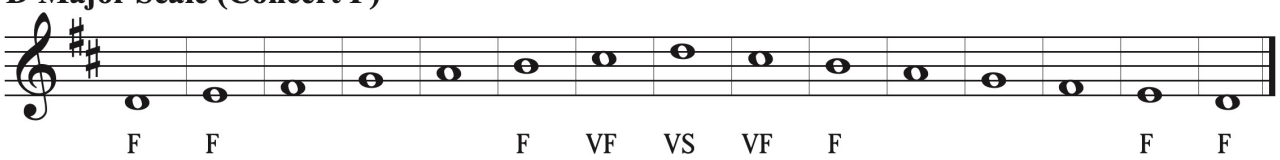
E Major Scale (Concert G)



A Major Scale (Concert C)



D Major Scale (Concert F)



Interval Tuning

Interval Tuning Explained

When multiple notes are played at a time, each note produces a unique sound wave based off the pitch being played. When the frequencies align, the beats or waves in the sound disappear and it sounds "in tune" to our ears. When more than one pitch is played, the notes above the fundamental pitch must be adjusted to make the frequencies align and create that "in tune" sound. We call this "just intonation."

Adjustments Needed

The adjustments listed below are the number of cents that must be raised or lowered in order to produce an "in tune" sound when playing an interval above the tonic (first note) of a key. It is important to note that your tuner will say that you are not in tune when playing this way - this is why it is important to listen first before you look at your tuner!

Major Scale

Unison	Major 2nd	Major 3rd	Perfect 4th	Perfect 5th	Major 6th	Major 7th	Perfect 8th
0	+4	-14	-2	+2	-16	-12	0

Minor Scale

Unison	Major 2nd	minor 3rd	Perfect 4th	Perfect 5th	minor 6th	minor 7th	Perfect 8th
0	+4	+16	-2	+2	+14	+18	0

Listen Before You Look

When an interval is adjusted properly the beats or waves in the sound disappear. Because of this, it is important to train yourself to listen for the in tune sound as your primary tuning mechanism. The tuner should be used as a reference point after you have used your ears to adjust the pitch. Always listen before you look!

When Should You Use This?

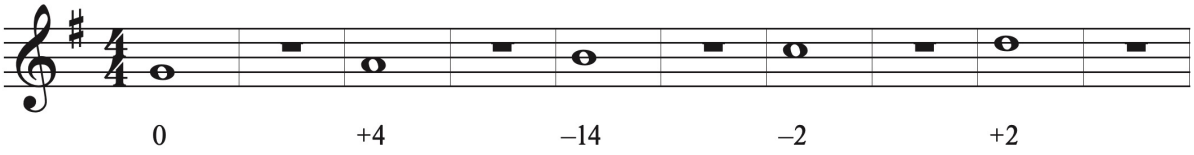
Just intonation or interval tuning is only necessary when playing chords or long and sustained sounds. When playing fast sections or melodic material, interval adjustments are not required.

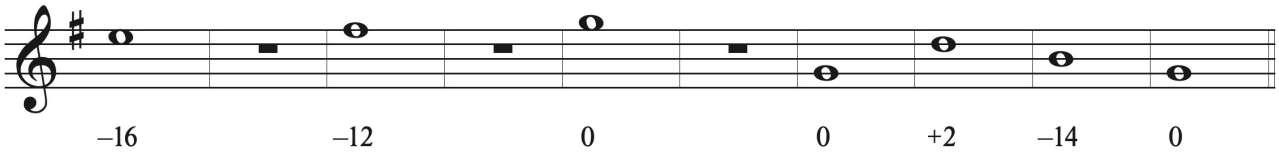
Alto Saxophone Interval Tuning

Make sure to listen to the drone during the rests and try to hear your next pitch before playing it!

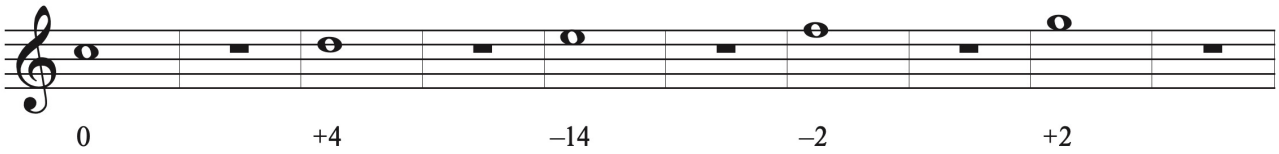
- lower pitch by number of cents + raise pitch by number of cents

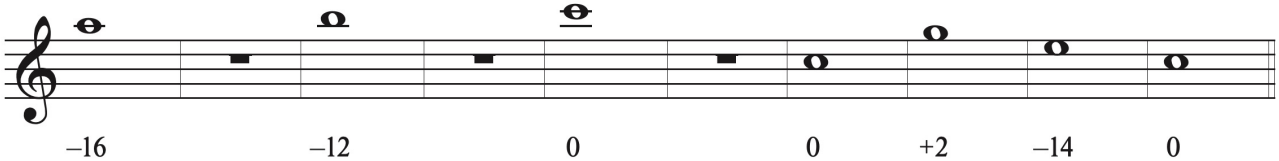
G Major (Concert Bb)



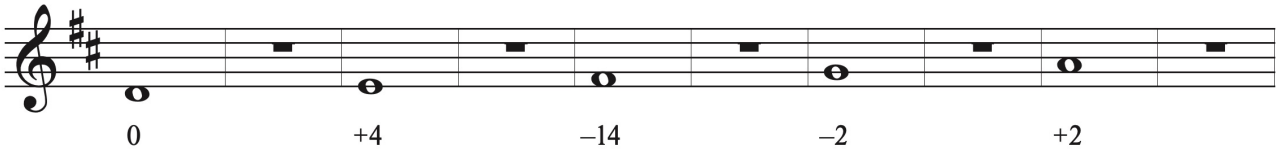


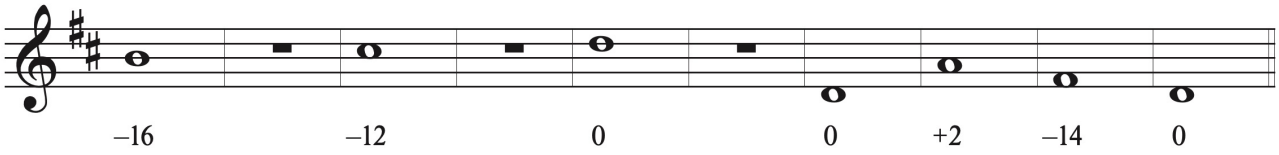
C Major (Concert Eb)





D Major (Concert F)





Alto Saxophone Interval Tuning

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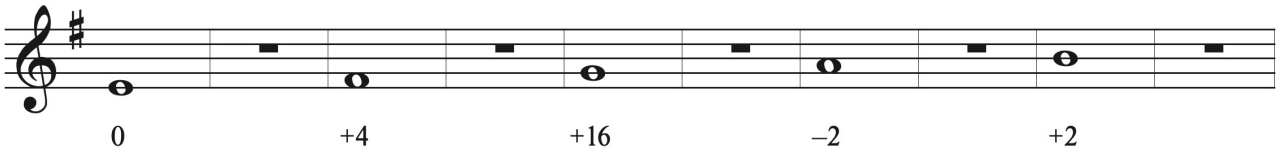
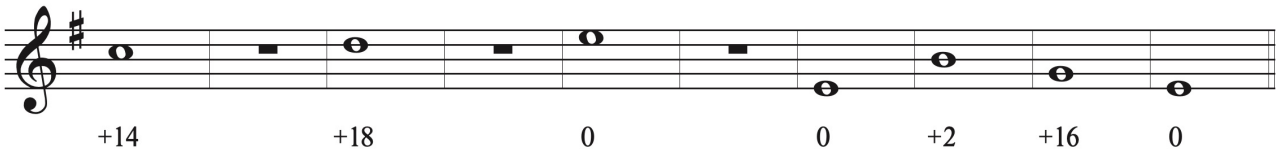
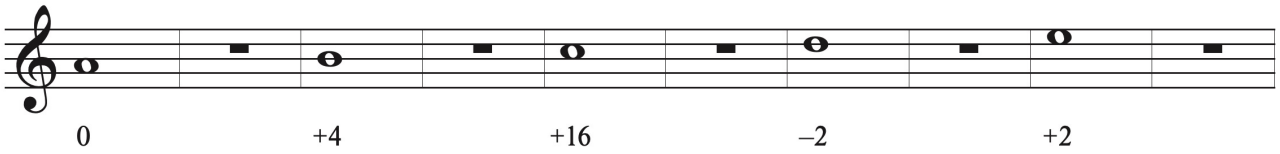
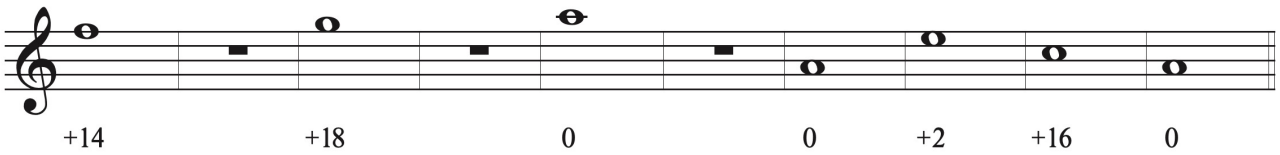
E minor (Concert G)





A minor (Concert C)





B minor (Concert D)