

Page reprint from [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org)

Find more stories like this under [Sing and Perform](#) > [Singing Skills](#)

# Better Tuning

Want an exercise to improve awareness of tuning?

---

## Developing increased awareness of dissonance and consonance

This short exercise can be used in small, ad hoc groups, or with a quartet. If there are many groups doing this at once, spread out and get some space to yourselves so that you can hear each other well. Everyone is always actively involved either singing or listening. It is a great skill builder for use after a warm-up or as part of a program to improve tuning.

Take 10-15 minutes and try this with everyone taking a turn.

- Achieve a mid-range note sung in unison by two good tuners in your group.
- One holds the note while the other slides slowly sharp, less than a quarter tone, and holds the result. Both breathe, establish the unison note again, and then one slides slowly flat, less than a quarter tone, and holds the result again.
- The others in the group listen, identifying and describing the characteristics of the dissonance.
- Each pair of men repeats the experience while the others listen.
- Repeat this with a variety of Major and Minor intervals as time allows.
- Finally, duet harmony parts with the lead while the others listen and notice any changes in the quality of the tuning.

A variety of effects will be noticed. A “beating” effect will be heard. It may be difficult for the singer of the non-moving tone to maintain the initial tone. All will appreciate the ease and clarity of the unison note sung in perfect tune, as well as the beauty and cleanliness of intervals sung perfectly in tune. Overtones, partials of the unison note will appear and disappear on cue.

We seldom really appreciate our tuning abilities and the beautiful results until we compare with a slightly out-of-tune situation that we create and control ourselves!

---

contents copyright of the author and copyright (c) 7/20/2005

Barbershop Harmony Society

7930 Sheridan Road

Kenosha, WI 53143

800-876-SING | 262-653-8440 | fax 262-653-4048

[info@barbershop.org](mailto:info@barbershop.org)

[PRINT THIS PAGE](#) | [CLOSE WINDOW](#)