

Harmonicas for Health Course Outline

(Please see www.WeDontSuck.com for more helpful information about this class.)

Week 1 – Basic warm up and breathing exercises, how to hold a harmonica, how to “cup” the harmonica, how to play a blow note, how to play a draw note and making the harmonica sound like a train.

Week 2 – Playing one note at a time and how to use harmonica tabs.

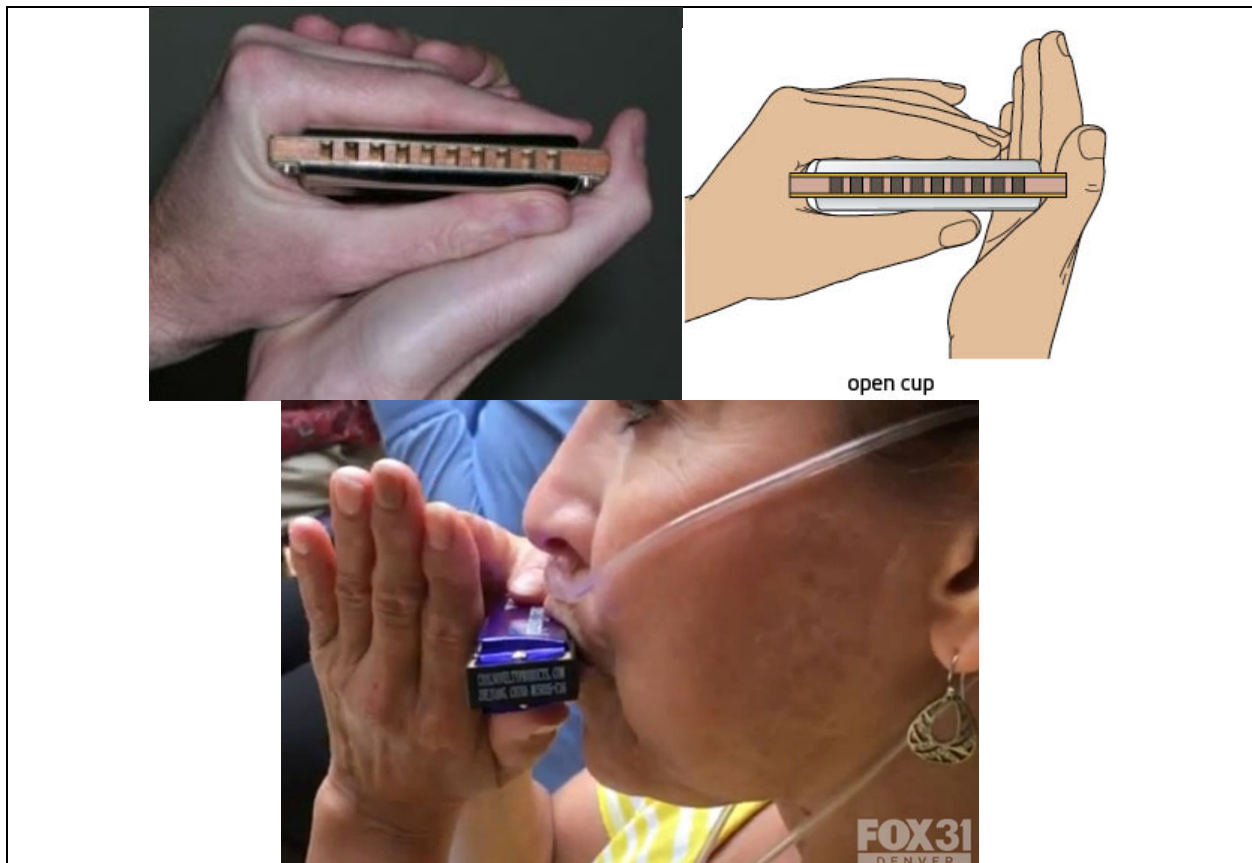
Week 3 – Advanced breathing techniques, mastering single note play, introduction to bending a note and more tabs.

Week 4 – Harmonica theory, playing your harp in other keys than it was made in, playing the blues and more help with bending.

Week 5 – Other beginning & intermediate harmonica tricks and techniques and improvisation.

Week 6 – Advanced harmonica techniques and playing along with your costume-made jamming CD.

What a good cup looks like:



Key: Any key Harmonica played in 1st Position.

Because of the way a diatonic harmonica is tuned you can play this song with any 10-hole harmonica that you have. However, if you want to jam along in tune with a recording, you will need a harmonica in the key of the recording for the tab below.

Home on the Range

4 4 5 -5 6 5 -4 5 -6 -6 -6

Oh, give me a home where the buf-fa-lo roam,

6 -6 7 4 4 4 -3 4 -4

Where the deer and the an-te-lope play

4 4 5 -5 6 5 -4 5 -6 -6 -6

Where sel-dom is heard a dis-cour-a-ging word,

6 -6 7 4 4 4 -3 -4 4

And the skies are not cloud-y all day.

6 -5 5 -4 5

Home, home on the range,

4 4 4 5 5 5 -4 5 -5

Where the deer and the an-te-lope play.

4 4 5 -5 6 5 -4 5 -6 -6 -6

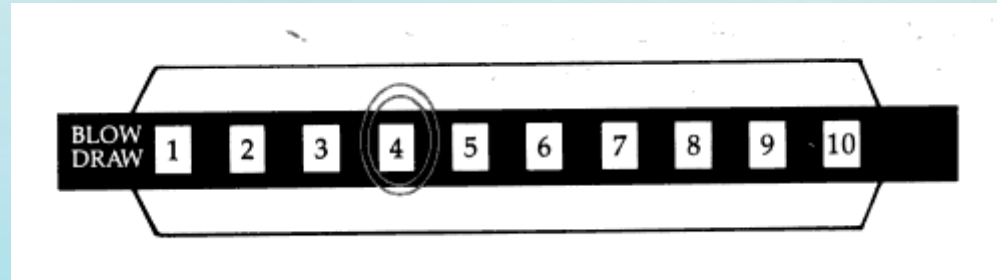
Where sel-dom is heard a dis-cour-a-ging word,

6 -6 7 4 4 4 -3 -4 4

And the skies are not cloud-y all day.

Play to breathe ~ Breathe to play

Exercise #1: *(from Wilbur's Beginning Harmonica Website)*



Start in the middle of the harmonica at hole #4

1. Exhale through your mouth until your lungs feel comfortably empty. (Don't force yourself).
2. Holding the harmonica in your left hand, put it in your mouth at the middle of the harmonica.

Play to breathe ~ Breathe to play

Exercise #1: (continued)

3. Gently draw (inhale) air back through the harmonica until your lungs are full once again. You should hear the pleasant sound of harmonica notes. If you don't inhale with sufficient force you won't get a note. If you inhale too hard you will get "bent" or overdrawn notes that don't sound very pleasant. Let your ears guide you towards long, deep, controlled breaths that create clear steady notes on the harmonica.

4. Once your lungs are full...hold your breath for a slow count of three.

5. Remove the harmonica from your mouth and exhale...and then start the process all over again by inhaling through the harmonica.

6. Repeat this process 15-20 times.

How's your cup?

	<p>Hold Harmonica by just two fingers - the index finger and the thumb of left hand with the high notes on the right and low notes on the left. Line the rest of the fingers along with the index fingers.</p>
	<p>The right hand are placed palm end to palm end to the left palm, and acts as a support to the left hand.</p>
	<p>The thumb of the right hand lies side by side with the left thumb.</p>

It is important to learn how to hold your harmonica comfortably so that you can make “a cup” with your hands around your harmonica. Opening and closing your cup is extremely important for controlling volume, and adding a rich vibrato or a “choked” tone to your sound. It also is very useful for creating sound effects like the sounds of a crying baby or a train whistle. We will be using the train whistle effect in our next exercise.

How to amaze small children

Exercise #2 – A different kind of training.

(Nothing captivates grandkids like sound of a harmonica imitating a train. In this exercise we will learn to get the train a rolling. It's easy as it is fun!)

- With your mouth over the 2 and 3 holes of your harmonica, take in (draw) air slowly and steadily as you flap your right palm on and off to open and close your cup. Sometimes it works better to leave the left and right palms touching and flap the hand like it was on a hinge attached where the two palms touch. Sometimes you may want to move the entire right hand on and off.
- Repeat this action. Train whistles always blow more than once.

How to amaze small children

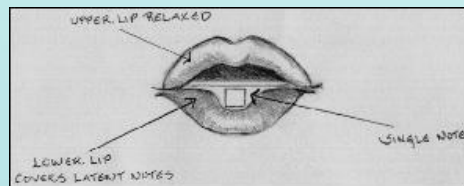
Exercise #2 – (continued)

- With your mouth still over the 2 and 3 holes of your harmonica, blow twice slowly followed by drawing twice slowly. Repeat this pattern over and over gradually going faster and faster.
- When the train gets rolling at comfortable cruising speed, try to hold it steady on this track as long as you can before throwing in another couple of train whistles.
- To complete this exercise, gradually increase the speed of the train until you are going as fast as you can.
- Finally slow the train down until it stops, and maybe tag on a couple more whistles to end it.

Next steps

I would not be a very good teacher if I did not give you some homework.

- You have now learned how to hold a harmonica, how to blow and draw through it and how use the cupping effect.
- The next technique you need to master to continue to improve as a harmonica player is probably more difficult for most people and is certainly more personalized: *how to get just one note at a time.*
- There are three main ways (illustrated below) to accomplish this, and the way you favor will depend on your unique mouth structure:



THE PUCKER



TONGUE BLOCK



U BLOCK