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LEARN TO PLAY A SINGLE NOTE

There are three ways to play a single note on the harmonica. Learn all three and you will be able to apply the method that best suits the music you want to play.

Tongue-Blocking

This is the most traditional and easiest way of playing a single note. It is used primarily for playing polkas, folk music, and country music. Although there are some professional blues harp players who swear by this method, most use the *pucker* or *curled-tongue* method. I use *tongue-blocking* to play more advanced techniques such as octaves and 6th and 7th chords.

- Cover four holes on the harmonica with your mouth and make a tight seal with your lips.
- Place your tongue against three of the holes while maintaining contact with your mouth and blow or draw, allowing air to pass through the one uncovered hole (Ex. 1a).



(Ex. 1a)

Pucker

This is the most popular way of playing a single note and is best suited for blues. In fact, I believe it was actually developed by blues harp players. I use the *pucker* method 75–80% of the time in my playing and for *all* of the tracks on the recording. The most decisive tone comes from this method, and it frees your tongue to bend notes more easily.

- Pucker your lips as if you were about to whistle or suck on a straw (Ex. 1b).
- Make a tight seal with your lips over one hole and blow or draw (Ex. 1c).



(Ex. 1b)

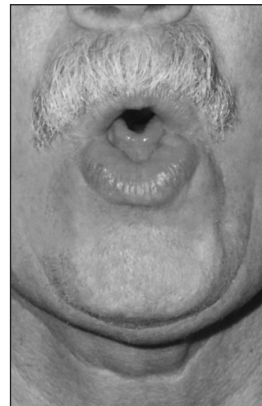


(Ex. 1c)

Curled Tongue

The last method is the most inventive and difficult to master. I do not favor it myself; however, some professional harp players use it as do some of my students.

- Curl your tongue into the shape of a small trough (Ex. 1d).
- Place your lips and tongue over the desired hole and blow or draw (Ex. 1e).



(Ex. 1d)



(Ex. 1e)

**E.
Y.
I.**

- The 12-bar progression on Track 2 is accompanied with boogie bass patterns.
- Measures 11 and 12 of a 12-bar blues progression are called the “turnaround.” On Track 2 the turnaround consists of a descending pattern that ends on the V (D) chord.

TRACKS 12 & 13: I-IV-I END TURNAROUND

- Measures 11 and 12 contain a descending lick that resolves to the root (G) note of the I (G) chord in measure 12.
- Although both regular turnarounds and end turnarounds can either ascend or descend, the descending end turnaround lick in Track 12 complements the descending turnaround pattern played by the rhythm guitar.



**Tracks
12 & 13**

Moderate shuffle ♩ = 72 (♩ = $\overset{\sim}{\underset{\sim}{\text{J}}}$ $\overset{\sim}{\underset{\sim}{\text{J}}}$)

G7

C7

G7

D7

C7

G7

C7

G7

G#7

G7



- Most end turnarounds end on the root (G) note.
- To add a spicy touch for variety, try ending your turnaround on the F note (draw hole 5) in measure 12.