

Beginner Blues Harmonica

An Overview of the Harp Instruction CD

This CD and accompanying booklet is a direct result of my students wanting something to take home and listen to. The methods that I use in this context are mine, and they have worked over my years of teaching. Play along with the CD. Do your best to learn the fundamentals no matter how boring it may seem at first. Your foundation skills are of utmost importance as you travel along that blues harp highway.

The booklet is meant to be used directly with the CD. I try to teach by ear so you can play with others and improvise freely. Playing with others is magic. And twice the fun. The CD and booklet go hand in hand, so try to keep them together in the CD jewel case.

Learning to play harmonica from scratch seems to be a big puzzle. Each piece is important and everyone learns a little differently. I try to give 3 or 4 ways to learn every skill. Hoping that one of them will hit you right between the eyes and you will learn that skill instantly. Eventually your brain will "sort out the puzzle" and that last piece will enable you to play seemingly overnight!

So please take your harp seriously. Practice whenever you can. Practice often. Talk and play with others. Listen to other players. Go see live musicians. Ask questions. Get into this thing. Over the years I have had a wonderful time playing the harp, and have met many lifetime friends. I hope you enjoy this CD, and it helps you. Your friend,





Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica

Comment.

Introduction (1)

Welcome to Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica. We are learning cross harp blues in the second position. You will need a standard ten-hole diatonic harmonica in the key of A (not a minor, chromatic, harmonic minor, echo or any other kind of harp).

Care of your harp (2)

Keep it in the case when you are not playing it. Wrap it in a sandwich bag and put it in your pocket. If you want to be a real harp slinger get yourself a holster and wear it on your belt every time you put your pants on.

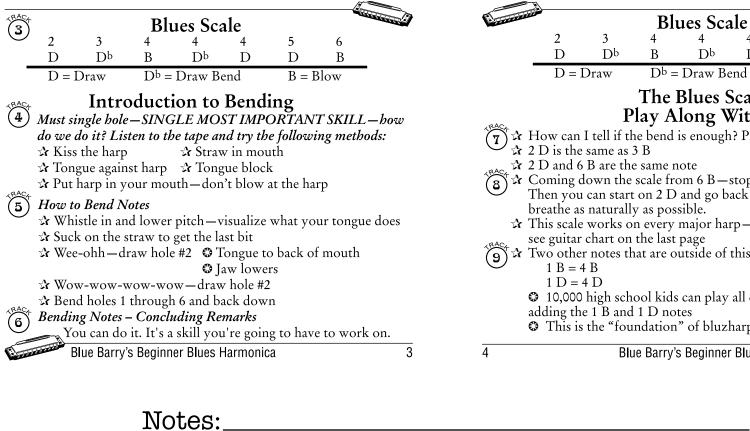
Whatever you eat or drink you will blow through your harp. The mortal enemies of all harmonicas include: potato chips, doritos, sugar products and candy and syrupy drinks. So if you want your harmonica to clog up eat and drink these before or while you play. If not, avoid these at all costs. Brush your teeth or at least rinse out your mouth before you play. If you must drink something, drink water. The cleaner your mouth is, the cleaner the harp will stay, and the longer it will play. Trust me on this.

Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica



Notes:			

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2	3	4	4	4	5	6	
D	D^{b}	В	D^{b}	D	D	В	
D = I	Oraw	Dþ =	= Draw Bo	end	B = F	3low	
How can 1 2 D is the 2 D and 6 Coming d Then you breathe as This scale see guitar Two other	I tell if the same as a B are the own the can start naturally works or chart on	lay A ne bend 3 B e same n scale fr on 2 D y as pos n every the last	note om 6 B— o and go b ssible. major ha	With In? Play a stop on ack up t rp—cha	3 B to gethe scale.	et rid of air Try to ys—	
1 B = 4 1 D = 4 10,000 adding the	D high sche 1 B and	1 D no	otes		using thi	s scale	
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Practice



Whenever you can

☆ Kiss the harp.

☆ In the car, rocking chair.

A I think it's better to practice 4 times a day for 15 minutes than to play 1 hour at a time. But, if you're having fun, play 2 hours.

A Play the scale a few times, break up scales or licks into parts and put them together. Then try to find licks or combinations of notes that sound good.

- ♪ Don't have to have a Ph.D. in music to know if it sounds good. If it sounds good, it is good! If it's not right, make it right. Use your ear to find what sounds right. Usually if it doesn't sound right it's a breathing problem. Play your licks or combinations slowly until you can learn how to play them with the least amount of air and the most efficient breathing pattern. Speed is not important, sounding good is. Speed will come as you become more familiar with the harmonica.
- A Harmonica by Ear—This is how you will have to learn it.
- No visual cues, such as frets, hands, chords.
- You can't see what I'm doing.
- You have to learn each skill on your own.
- By playing the scale your ear becomes accustomed to the sounds and automatically goes there, eventually finding licks by recognizing notes.



Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica

ج 11)	Blo	wing	the Bl	lues S	cale		
2	3	4	4	4	5	6	
D	D^{b}	В	D^{b}	D	D	В	
D =	Draw	Db =	Draw Be	end	B = F	3low	

Steps to Blowing the Blues – explanation for Track 13

- 1. Chord-Single Note-Chord "3 note blues" (4 rows left to right) Đ D 123 D 345 2 D 123 123 D D D x2Đ
- - 2. Hand Vibrato—holding the harp (look in the mirror, play scale)
- 3. Octaves 3 4 5 6 4 note chord tongue covers middle (15) 2 holes, let outside notes ring out. This pretty much works on
 - any 4-note blow chord.
- 4. Trill—1 2 3 D and Blow—tongue from side to side

Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica



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(17)	5. Two Note Slide—"Train Sounds" **Train Sounds**	Neat Fast "Lick" 4 4 5 B D D
	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	Same "Lick" Up High 9 9 8 B D D
18	~ means slide between holes 4 and 5 6. Ascending single notes or chords—triplets 2 3 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 5 6 6 6 7 7 7 8 9 DDB DDB DDB DDB DDB DDB	9. Chugging—What is it? One person can play two parts 2 1 2 3 1 1 2 3 2 1 2 3 1Forever D B B D B B D B B D Lay down a basic rhythm then play notes of the blues scale over it.
(19)	7. Descending single notes 9 9 8 8 8 7 7 7 6 6 6 5 5 5 4 4 3 2 2 BDD BDD BDD BDD BDD BDD D	Chugging teaches proper breathing, timing, use of the scale and improvisation. This is how I learned to play. 10. Tools to put in Your "Blues Box" • Scales
20	8. Slide up or down to single note Say you want 6 - Slide up 3 4 5 6 B B B B B Say you want 4 to the 6 - try 2 3 4 4 - 4 5 6 Db B D D D Db B B B	 Bends Licks Combinations Chugs Slides Whatever you can find or steal from other players Heart and soul
	Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica 7	8 Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica
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11. Blues Scale (see top of page 6)



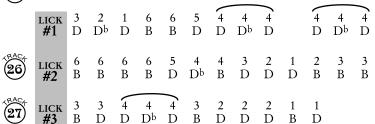
- 12. Breath Control—This is the trick to becoming a real harp player. Chugging will teach you how to breath and back yourself up while playing the most notes with the least amount of air.
 - Same as when you whistle
 - Use air in your mouth—short column of air
 - Try to breathe naturally as you can
 - I breathe out my nose, but not in (breathe through harp)

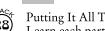
around the "corners" of the notes.

• Try to use the *least amount of air* that you can when you play. This will always give you a reserve to draw from.









Putting It All Together - Licks 1, 2, & 3 Learn each part and them put them together. Be sure to use your hand vibrato.



The "Classic" Sonny Boy Williamson Opening Blues Lick

									45				
D	D	D	В	В	$D_{\mathbf{A}}$	\mathbf{D}_{P}	D~	D~	D~	D	В	В	D_{β}
				2-note	e slide	train s	sound						



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Muddy Waters Lick 2 4 3 2 1 2 3 D B D D D D Low Rider "Lick" by Lee Oskar of "War"	 "12-Bar" Blues Progression in I-IV-V Format When you got a good friend—See chart on next page Play the 12-bar and blow or draw 4 times per bar for 12-bars. You must get the 12-bar in your head. You need to anticipate the changes. Follow the chart below. Play along with the tape until you OWN this 12-bar progression. The explanation on the next page will go into more detail but it is the same thing.
(31) Low Rider "Lick" by Lee Oskar of "War" 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 6 4 5 5 5 4 B B B B B D B B D B B x2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 4 D D D D D D D D D B D B (really first position, but it sounds cool) (32) Gravel Throat Sound	I
Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica 11 Notes:	Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica

Understanding the "12-Bar" Blues Progression Let's make it easy . . . you need to know three chords! 1. The One (I) Chord—The key you're in (E) 2. The Four (IV) Chord—4 notes from the one chord (A) 3. The Five (V) Chord—5 notes from the one chord (B) Seeing is believing . . . see below . . . done for the key of E for guitar I II III IV V VI VII VIII

This is the basic I–IV–V (1–4–5) blues progression. Let's map out Robert Johnson's "When You Got a Good Friend," in the key of E-12-bar blues style.

Ε

D	I raw 2			I' Blo	V w 2					Dra	I aw 2		_	
1 2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
When	You	Got	a Go	od F	rien	d – 7	hat	will	s t a n	d rig	ht by	ууо	ur s	i d e
			V w 4							Dra	I aw 2			
1 2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
When	You	Got	a Go	od F	rien	d – 7	'hat	will	stan	d rig	ht by	y o	ur s	i d e
D	V raw 4			I' Blo				Dra	I iw 2		I D	2	I	V D1
1 2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	i 3	4
You b	etter	give	h e r	all y	our	spar	e tin	1e –	Love	and	trea	t he	r rig	ht
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Comme	BI	lue Ba	arrv's	Beai	nner	Blue	s Hai	rmon	iica					13

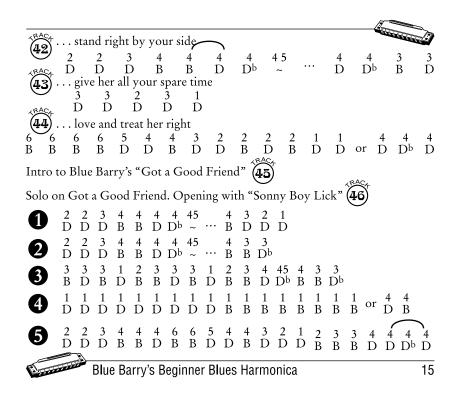


35 Phrasing

Phrasing is the art of "laying off," it is learning when *not* to play. By leaving gaps in your music what you do play will be remembered by the audience. When I play a 12-bar break I pretty much set up the whole 12-bars for one memorable lick. This will come with practice, just hang in there. Every harp player uses pretty much the same notes, phrasing is how you put those notes together. This is how you come up with your own style. *Other than the blues scale itself, phrasing is the most important thing you can learn out of this book.*

scare usery, pistusing is the most impor	inni ini	ng yo	n cun	icuin	oni oj	usis ve	JUK.
^RAC.7 (36)	Here a	are the	e licks	on th	e song	,	
Introduction to	(39) .	Go	t a goo	od frie	end		
"When You've Got a Good Friend"	3	3	3 D	2 D	2 Dh	1 D	
(37)	(40) .	D	D		D	ide	
"When You've Got a Good Friend" written by Robert Johnson	4	stai	6	11 by . 5	y Our 3.	4	_4
performed here by Blue Barry	$D_{ARAC_{A}}$	D	В	D	D	D^{b}	D
vocal, guitar and harmonica.	41).	got	a goo	d frie	nd		
38 Practice & Learn 12-bar Solo	3 D	3 D	3 D	2 D	$_{ m D^b}^2$	1 D	
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"When You've Got A Good Friend," harp/guitar...listen, copy, find, and learn.

Conclusion

Hope you enjoyed the CD and will learn from it. Refer back to the CD.

You may miss something the first time. Give yourself time to progress; your brain will sort things out. Stay with it and learn how.

Practice, be patient, listen to other players.

Play with other people-ask questions.

Think blues, think harp-find a song you like and learn it.

The harp is a "personal thing" your very breath of life plays it.

"Juke"-Little Walter-Key of A. Get a copy and play along with it. "Learn It." Make a 30 minute tape with nothing but background 12-bar to practice with.

Copy my 12-bar over and over if you like.

Where to buy harps? My favorite places are:

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Musician's Friend 1-800-391-8762 • www.musiciansfriend.com

Kevin's Harps 1-800-274-2776

Who do I listen to:

Studebaker John, Will Clark, Lee Oskar, Billy Bizor, Rock Bottom, Carey Bell, James Cotton, Freeman Stowers, Salty Holmes, Billy Branch and there will be many more as time goes by.

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Twelve minutes of Blues Backup with Blue Barry on harp and acoustic guitar, and Sandy Garrett on bass and drum machine. Time to practice your chops until you OWN them with a standard 12-bar blues format.

What kind of harmonicas do I play?

I play Lee Oskar harmonicas. Over the past 30 years I've played about every kind of harp there is. Some good, some bad, some in between. But for the last 10 years or so I have played the Lee Oskars and love them. I can pull a new one out of the case and play it with no break in or worry about it not bending. The holes are large, it's easy to play,

they seem to take less air, and they sound loud and proud. They also come apart easily with a small nut and bolt system. I have a Lee Oskar tool kit, and I can change reeds in no time, and even do repairs to the reeds. This is what it looks like if you take it apart.





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Lee Oskar harmonicas are great to experiment with different tunings as well. They come in major diatonic, natural minor, harmonic minor, and melody makers. It is a working man's harp. Rather than buy a new harp, you can simply replace the reeds. Pretty cool. And economical. Check out Lee's website below.

My favorite harmonica newsletter: American Harmonica Newsletter

Al Eichler, Editor,

104 Highland Avenue

Battle Creek, Michigan 49015-3272

1-year subscription is \$24.00 and worth it!

How to contact Blue Barry:

308 Maple Loop Road Knoxville, TN 37920

My favorite websites:

You got it—www.harmonicast.com This training is available in interactive multimedia format.

The Harmonica Man's Home Pagewww.inscorp.com/harmonica Charlie Potter's web site author of "This Harmonica Is For You."

Lee Oskar-www.leeoskar.com Best harmonicas on the planet.

Delta Souls-www.deltasouls.iuma.com

Steve Big Daddy BluzHarp Harvell—

bluzharp.tripod.com/

Alan Elliott

The HARMONICA HONKER http://hometown.aol.com/hhonker

Blue Barry's Beginner Blues Harmonica

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A special thanks to Songwriters Recording Studio. It is owned and operated by Sandy Garrett. The studio is in Sandy's house and what a grand place it is! Sandy was a great help, and offered many good suggestions. I don't know who had more fun, he or I. We laughed and carried on like two starving boys at a church picnic. Thanks buddy....

Songwriters Recording Studio 1605 Fairmont Blvd., Knoxville, TN 37917

Thanks to Tim and Peggy Bouton for their hard work and extreme positive attitude throughout this whole project. From the design work to the finished product, their hands have been full.

Extra special thanks to my wife, the lovely Debra Ann. Who not only is the best typesetter in all of Knoxvegas, she also doubles as the prettiest girl, and triples as the best cook in town as well! That should keep me looking good for some time. Deb has spent many an hour listening to me play the blues. I can't thank her enough, but I try. Thanks baby.



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Cross Harp Key Chart							
Guitar	Harp	Guitar	Harp				
$G \dots$	• • • C	D^b					
$A^b \bullet \bullet \bullet$	$ullet$ D^b	D	G				
A • • •	D	E^b	• • Ab				
B ^b •••	• • • E ^b	E ••••	• • A				
В	• • • E	F ••••	•• Bb				
C	•••F	$F^{\#} \bullet \bullet \bullet \bullet$	B				
Pract	ice, Desire,	Confidence					
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