

## Harmonica Information



The most common harmonicas in use today have 10 holes and are equipped with a double set of brass reeds, arranged two per hole. One set of reeds sounds when you exhale, or blow through the harmonica, the other set sounds when you inhale, or draw through the harmonica. By positioning your mouth and tongue over selected holes and adjusting to blow or draw, you can play melodies and chords.

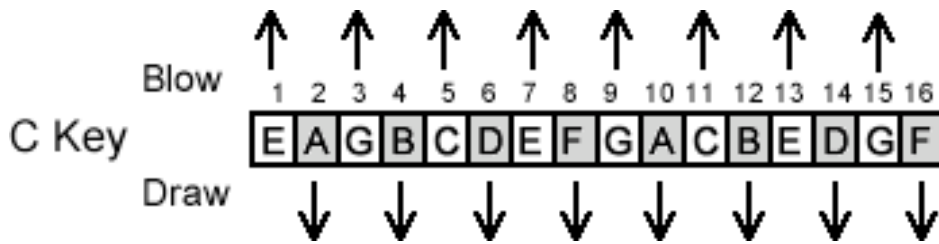
Harmonicas are built to a specific key, meaning that different harmonicas are built with reeds tuned to a set of notes in the target key. A professional musician may carry a number of harmonicas, and select the one that matches the key that will be used for a particular musical number.

One of the most common keys is the key of C. The notes available on a 10-hole C Key diatonic harmonica (such as the Marine Band made by Hohner) are shown below.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
C key	Blow	C	E	G	C	E	G	C	E	G	C
	Draw	D	G	B	D	F	A	B	D	F	A

In a 10-hole harmonica, each hole sounds one note when you blow and a different note when you draw. By blowing on more than one hole at a time, you play one or more of the notes of a C major *chord* (C, E, and G form a C major chord). When drawing, depending on the holes you draw, you can play chords such as G Major (D, G, B), and D Minor (D, F, A). This allows you to accompany a melody being played by another band member. By puckering your mouth, you can play single notes. This is useful when doing such common things as echoing a musical phrase that has just been sung, or doing a blues riff.

Promotional harmonicas – such as the ones we hand out at our tradeshow booth - have 16 holes with a single set of reeds that combine both the blow and draw notes. Holes are alternately either blow or draw, but not both. The Optix harmonica that you obtained from the Mindwrap tradeshow booth is of this type and has the following arrangement of notes:



Note how the “blow” notes (C, E, G) repeat every three notes and the “draw” notes (D, F, A, B) repeat every 4 notes. This is the same note arrangement as the upper portion of the standard 10-hole harmonica described earlier.

## Sample Music

You can easily learn to play songs on the harmonica without knowing how to read music. It’s easy and you can be playing stuff that sounds great in just a few minutes.

A lot of music may be found on the web for the Harmonica (see <http://www.volcano.net/~jackmearl/songs/>). Most of this is written in harmonica tablature for 10-hole C-key harmonicas, but is easily translated for use with your Optix 16-hole harmonica using the quick translation table below. The tablature specifies the hole and whether to blow or draw, written above the lyrics to the song. Find a song you like, translate the hole numbers using the table, and give it a whirl. We have translated a couple of traditional favorites to get you started quickly.

	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓		
<b>10-Hole Notation</b>	1	-1	2	-2	3	-3	4	-4	5	-5	6	-6	7	-7	8	-8	9	-9	10	-10
Note	C	D	E	G/A	G	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	C	B	E	D	G	F	C	A
<b>16-Hole Notation</b>			1	-2	3	-4	5	-6	7	-8	9	-10	11	-12	13	-14	15	-16		

The tunes on the following pages have been translated and are ready to be played on your Optix harmonica. While learning, you may find it helpful to use some paper and clear tape to number the holes across the top of the harmonica.

It can be a lot of fun to learn to play and you may find that you enjoy the convenience of an instrument that you can pull out of your purse or backpack at any time to impress your friends, family, or simply to pass some quite time in musical contemplation.

The Optix harmonica is fun, but if you decide to get serious about playing, we suggest that you buy a real quality instrument such as the Marine Band model from Hohner, which is available for under \$30 from a number of stores and online.

(Harmonica Tablature..... 4 means blow on 4 hole)  
(..... -4 means draw on 4 hole)

## Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

5 5 9 9 -10-10 9  
Twinkle, twinkle little star.

-8 -8 7 7 -6 -6 5  
How I wonder what you are.

9 9 -8 -8 7 7 -6  
Up above the world so high,

9 9 -8 -8 7 7 -6  
Like a di'mond in the sky.

5 5 9 9 -10-10 9  
Twinkle, twinkle little star.

-8 -8 7 7 -6 -6 5  
How I wonder what you are.

## Danny Boy

9 -10-12 11 -12 -12  
Oh, Danny-boy, the pipes,

-10 9 -10 9 7 5  
the pipes are calling

9 -10 -12 11  
from glen to glen

-10 9 7 5 7 -6  
and down the mountainside.

-4 5 -5 7  
The summer's gone

-6 7 -10 9 7 -6 5 5  
and all the roses falling.

-4 5 -6 7 -10 9  
It's you, it's you must go

7 5 -6 5  
and I must pine.

9 -10 -12 11 -12  
But come ye back when

-12 -10 9 -10 9 7 5  
summer's in the meadow

9 -10 -12 11 -12 -10  
or when the valley's hushed

9 5 7 -6  
and white with snow.

9 9 9 13  
It's I'll be here

-14 -14 11 -10 11 9 7 5  
in sunshine or in shadow.

-4 5 -6 7  
Oh, Danny-boy.

-10 9 7 -6 5 5 -6 5  
Oh, Danny-boy, I love you so.

repeat from

"But come ye back...." to end.

5 -8 -10 9 11 13  
ending:....., I love you so!

Additional harmonica music may be found on the web at:

<http://www.volcano.net/~jackmearl/songs/>