

Dave's Harmonica Lessons

David Raleigh Arnold *

0.1 How to Practice

To learn the harmonica you must practice. Until you can play a bit, three hours a week of practice should do, given good concentration. The new things come first, but spend at least half of your time on things that you can play already. You don't practice until you get it; you get it, then you practice it.

Find at least five minutes a day *every day*, for doing head work like counting when you play. Do it aloud when you are not blowing or drawing.

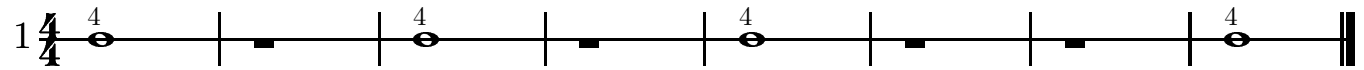
0.2 Some Fundamentals are More Important than Others.

Find a way to blow a single note. Cover the 3rd and 5th holes with your fingers and blow in the hole between. The most important thing is to get to where your notes sound like that without the fingers. Learn to keep time. Listen to yourself. Make breath control a priority. Keep it slow to build control.

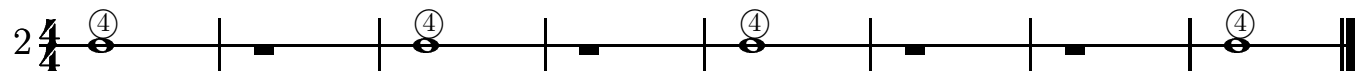
1 Get a single note! That is essential!

1.1 Whole notes (semibreves) and rests are four counts each.

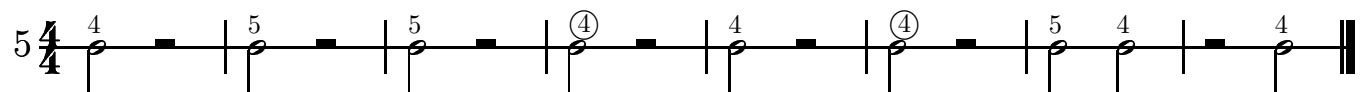
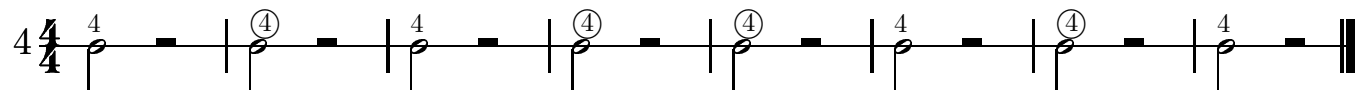
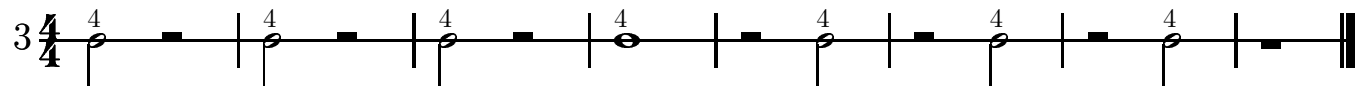
Learning to keep time is one of those few things in life which you must either do correctly or certainly fail. So do it! The slower you play, the farther you can look ahead, and the faster you will progress as a musician. Count "1 2 3 4" out loud when there are rests. The notes have numbers telling which hole to blow.



What follows a bar or bar line is on the first count *always*. The circle means draw air in, not blow out. You still have to get *one note*.



1.2 Half notes and rests are two counts each.



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1.3 Quarter notes and rests are one count each.

6 $\frac{4}{4}$ 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4

Boil That Cabbage Down

7 $\frac{4}{4}$ 6 6 6 5 6 6 6 5 6 6 6 5 4 6 6 6 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4

95 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4

2 In Which We Begin to Divide the Beat

Sometimes you don't have four counts. Here you have three.

The little number "9" indicates the ninth measure. The bar is actually drawn at the end of the previous line. The first bar line is omitted if the music starts on the first beat.

8 $\frac{3}{4}$ 4 4 5 5 6 6 7 7 7

97 7 7 7 6 6 6 5 5 5 5 4 4 4

The eighth note is indicated with beams or flags. They get 1/2 count each. Count "one and two and three and four and ..."

9 $\frac{4}{4}$ 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 6 6 6 7 7 7 7

54 4 4 4 4 5 5 5 5 6 6 6 6 7 7 7 7

2.1 Juba

10 $\frac{4}{4}$ 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 4 4 4

135 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4

215 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4

295 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4

fine

D.C.