

# Enjoying your new lever harp

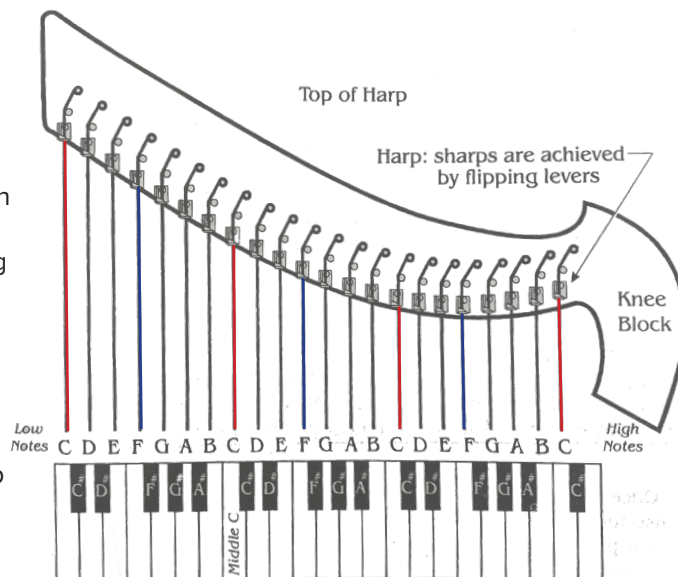
## How often will I need to tune my harp?

Harp strings vary in terms of how often they require tuning but a new harp may take up to two weeks before the strings settle down and hold their tune. Fine tuning is usually required each time they are played. Moving the harp around the house or to different venues will increase the number of tunings required. If this is a new harp, we recommend tuning once a day initially, even if you are not playing it.

For harps that have been shipped, the harp must be tuned slightly lower in pitch to begin with in order to prevent breaking strings or damaging the soundboard during transit. It will take many tunings for the harp to stabilize in pitch and this is normal for a new harp.

## Before tuning

We recommend you tune your harp with the aid of a chromatic tuner such as the Korg CA50 tuner and the Korg CM300 clip-on microphone. For those of you who are familiar with the piano, it may be easier to tune your harp to the piano. In the diagram to the right, the piano keyboard is shown next to the harp strings for the purpose of tuning. Using an electronic tuner with the pickup will provide the most accurate reading. Plug the pickup into the input jack of your tuner and attach the clip to the back of your harp. You may have to play around with the position of the microphone as you move up and down the harp.



## The tuning

To tune your harp, disengage all levers along the top of the harp so they are not touching the strings (the 'off' position). Start with the lowest string (longest string), and with your right hand use the tuning key to tighten or loosen the string you are tuning. Pluck the string with your left second finger and check your tuner. Watch what note is appearing on the tuner in relation to the string you are tuning and bring the note up gradually to pitch. Then check to see if the light or needle of the tuner is centred to indicate the string is in tune. If the light or needle is to the left of centre, the string is flat, or too low in pitch. If the light or needle is to the right of centre, the string is too sharp, or high in pitch. If the string is flat, turn the tuning pin clockwise, or away from you. If the string is sharp, turn the tuning pin anticlockwise, or towards you.

It is a good idea to initially tune each string slightly flat of the required pitch and to gradually, with each tuning, bring the strings up to pitch.

Usually harps are tuned with the levers off to prevent damaging the strings, but most people tune the As, Bs and Es to the flats ie. Ab, Bb and Eb. The rest are all tuned to the naturals. A beginner may decide to ignore the levers completely to begin with and tune all the strings to the naturals when the levers are set in the off position, however this can put additional strain on the strings and may cause breakages.

When tuning the strings, it is important to push the tuning pins in with the tuning lever at the same time as you tighten the strings. Otherwise the pins may slip and the strings will not hold in tune – this is the most common problem with a new harp. It is important to understand that the pins and the holes are tapered and held in by friction. If you are not careful the taper will loosen and the strings won't hold. If the taper is broken, you will need to tap the pins back in firmly using a hammer, but not so hard that the wood is split! Usually slackening a string off slightly and pushing the pin in firmly as you're turning the tuning lever is enough to solve this problem.

## HELPFUL TIP

**Watch** that you are tuning the correct tuning pin for the string you are plucking. This is a common cause of breaking strings!

**Look** to see that the string is indicating the correct letter on the tuner!

**Play** the string continually until you hear that it is in tune! Keep an eye on the needle of the electronic tuner.

Once the string is in tune, move up the harp tuning each string before strumming all of the strings a few times and starting again at the bottom. You can also tune all the C octaves, D's, etc as an alternative way of tuning as some harpists find this to be easier. You should tune the harp every time you practise and it is not unusual to have to tune every day, but you will get faster each time you tune.

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## The levers

The levers are adjustable (on harps where fitted) and there are two ways to adjust them: at the bridge pin (for fine adjustment) or at the base of the lever using the screw or screws holding the lever to the harp (usually only done if the lever is a long way out of tune).

We supply a regulation tool with all of our lever harps which have adjustable bridge pins.

## Testing the levers and making adjustments via the bridge pin

Before doing this, the harp must be fully tuned and must be able to hold itself in tune. **Do not** adjust the levers within the first few weeks of having received the harp.

Play a string and note the position of the needle on the tuner. When you engage the lever play the same string again and the note will be a semitone higher. The needle should be in the same position as it was when the note was sounded with the lever disengaged. It does not need to be exactly the same position and a 3-5% difference in the position of the needle on the tuner is not uncommon.

If it's too sharp, screw the bridge pin in with the regulation tool provided.  
If it's too flat, screw the bridge pin out with the regulation tool provided.

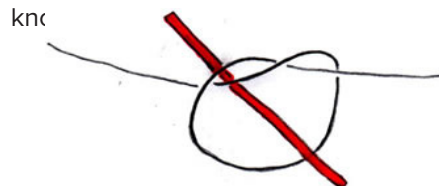
## How to replace a string

### HELPFUL TIP

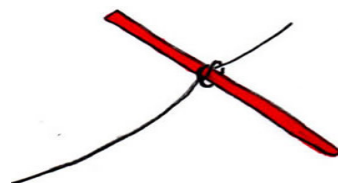
When replacing the highest strings, you may have noticed that it is difficult to find the string hole from inside the sound box. Before you tie your end knot, try threading the string through the hole from the front of your soundboard. Pull the string through the back sound holes and then make your knot. This will only work if your string is long enough to allow you to make the knot without pulling it through the string hole.

1. To get started, you will need the full length of string from your string package. Then cut an inch long piece of the string. This will be your end stick.

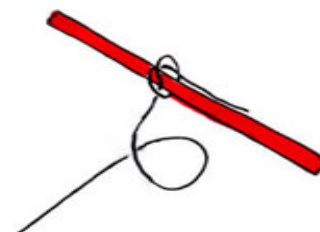
2. Make a regular overhand knot and put your end stick (or string tie) through the knot.



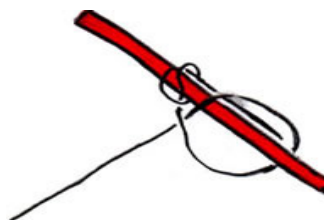
3. Pull it tight.



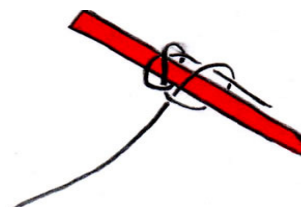
4. Then make a loop as shown.



5. Put it around the end stick that also includes the string end. This is basically a half hitch.



6. Pull it tight and cut the end off if it's longer than the end stick.



7. Now that you've got the knot tied at the end of the string, you'll need to thread it past the lever and through the tuning pin.

8. Line up the hole of the tuning pin so that it is vertical. Standing behind the harp, thread the string through the hole (it should be going straight up past the center of the lever and through the hole in the tuning pin) and pull it back towards you.

9. Then slip the string below the tuning pin and between the wooden neck of the harp and the string you just threaded up through the tuning pin. You will be pushing the string toward the front of the harp now.

10. Bring it up between the tuning pin you're stringing and the tuning pin of the string one note below and pull it out away from the harp.

11. Begin tuning up the string. The first wind should catch around the end of the string. Make sure your winds go toward the neck of the harp as you tune. Try to get a straight line from the tuning pin to the bridge pin.

12. Using the cutters of the needle nose pliers, cut off all of the extra string to avoid any buzzing and to keep your harp tidy.

**If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact us.**

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