

Some people choose to tune to Eb. This allows you to have access

- F, G and D! And when I join sessions or ensembles (fiddle and guitar and keyboard), most of the time these keys work great. to all the musical keys. However! Even though many classical and pop pieces can be played in this key, some songs require a lot of lever flipping!
- I have seen some harpists keep their harps in the key of Bb. This gives them the keys of: Bb, F, C, G and D. Some medieval, classical and pop music is in Bb. There are a lot of Bb instruments, so this is a good choice if you do ensemble work.
- **IMPORTANT!! Some harps come already tuned to a key by the manufacturer! This is also your indication that the harp was made for this tuning because the builder made adjustments in the wood, bracing and string tension to bring out the best sound. Re-tuning the harp lower or higher may not bring out the best sound for the structure of the harp.**

The great folks at our local harp store in Denver, Colorado from Kolacny Music, Alison Coates, Tony Petrossi and David Kolacny, all put their heads together and wanted to share these tips with you:

- **String noise** could come from poorly wrapped string ties at the bottom end of the string or an uneven wrap around the tuning pin
- Check the condition of your strings often. If the wrap of a low string has been damaged or frayed, it will soon unwrap from use
- **Strings are not universal.** They are made and specific to each model of harp. When you order strings - always order for the harp you have! Manufacturers put on particular strings for a reason!
- If you do end up changing strings, change the higher octaves strings first. These strings are thinner and tend to "go false" quicker
- **Loose tapered tuning pins** can be tightened by *pushing in* with the tuning wrench
- When **playing outdoors**, lay a blanket down to keep the moisture off the bottom of the harp
- Don't leave the harp near a heater or a window! The **sun can lighten** or fade the wood

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary
Vidal Sassoon

The following are tips from harp students. They share what helped them in learning to play:

- **Maureen McKasy-Donlin** - "I find it helpful to tap into the harp community, watch others perform (to watch their fingers!). I buy CD's to listen to harp music, it helps me learn the tune faster"
- **Brenda Landdeck** - "Avoid Pakistani harps like the plague! - I got one off Ebay, and it was discouraging to get an awful harp where all the strings were snapping right and left.
(Star's note: Some of my students bought these harps and had good luck with them, some didn't fare well. The quality is not very consistent)
- **Tena Copeland-Shaddox** - "I am glad I don't have to lean the harp on my shoulder and support the harp with my body, the harp can stand on its own. This makes my job easier and freed me up to play"
- **Maryam Saffari-Parizi** - "Writing down the brackets and fingering *ahead of time* is very useful! Try not to be bashful and make up your own songs....practice note reading every day!"
- **Erin Martin** - "Make sure how you hold your fingers and that they are in a good position, *before* you practice your song a hundred times!"
- **Morgan Pfeiffer** - "Setting aside a specific time to practice every day"
- **Jaden Booth**: "The colored strings helps in finding my placement. Playing songs I know is fun and makes learning easy".
- **Stu Brann** - "It has helped me tremendously by going to lessons regularly. It focuses me; It's a discipline of showing up, also I agree with Anne!"
- **Anne Crabtree** - The neighbor notes and every other notes has helped as opposed to memorizing the note"
- **Renee Adelmann** - "I come from a strict classical piano background with a lot of rigid rules. The key is to PLAY and have FUN. I learned harp quickly this way. No performance expectations....just play! This concept has helped me to overcome longtime obstacles and enjoy my harp"
- **Marilyn Lager** - "Its wise to memorize the pieces and watch your fingers as you play. That is the opposite from the piano!"
- **Karen Sue Lawhead** - "Every night I did Brain Gym and it helped!!"

*The uncreative mind can spot wrong answers, but it takes a
creative mind to spot wrong questions
Thomas Jefferson*