

## How I do it:

To say in advance: I am fully autodidactic in all musical concerns - and most other concerns too. So I taught me to play the harmonica by myself some 50 years ago, fully unspoiled of teaching and school wisdom of any kind.

1. I play it with low tones to the left and high tones to the right - that means “regularly” concerning this feature. It was a diatonic bluesharp btw, which I did not choose by myself, but found by accident. It choosed me. I don't remember why I choosed to play it like this. Maybe it were the numbers engraved on the lid to show me what is meant the upside, or maybe it was the order of the keys on the piano I had in mind, or maybe it was mere random?

2. I did never think about how to hold it - be it with my left hand or with my right hand. From the very beginning I held it firmly between **both** of my hands, exactly between the roots of both thumbs or / and the roots of both indexes. The exact position of the harp I always choose intuitively depending on how cupped or or how open I intend to play a very tune. I did not change this since nearly 50 years of constant practice. There simply was no need for.

My model to do so were the bluesharp players popular then - like John Mayall and others - they were not too many that time, as well as the great old bluesers from Chicago and Downsouth. They all were cupping closely most of the time - independent whether they played acoustically or electrically. And lively hand working like wahwah, echo and hall etc I practiced from the beginning.

Soon I found out, that not the blues but the native folk music of my own country was my very cup of tea. And with this I preferred to play the voice of the rhythm guitar - as known from beat and rock music, respectively the rhythm section of a brass band with their horns, trumpets, trombones and tubas etc.

For this I kept my way of holding the harp. It was suitable very fine to this. If not cupping for wahwah and other effects or for electric play, I started to keep the harp loosely between the roots of both of my indexes, keeping it in place with the lowest joint of my left middle finger against the middle of the harp's backside. This enables me to beat the harp rhythmically with the right hand from right to left while beating it back with the thumb of the left hand. This is sounding like shredding on a heavy metal (electric) guitar, mixable with some kind of a harsh breaking of tones and chords under full blow or draw - I call it slapping. (Players of the bass guitar might easily understand what I mean. And since later on I am slapping and shredding the bass harmonica too.)

And long range glissandi up and down like on a violin or a slide guitar is easily possible too when holding the harp like this. The type of the harp used does not matter at all here.

Practicing quite unique styles like this and much more of that kind, you can imagine that I never more cared about old school teachings of how to hold a harmonica or handle a slide etc etc. Since I play chroms and other slide harps too, I kept this for it was working on these as well. And since the slide on these usually is mounted to the right side, this met my handling as a right hander perfectly. No change and no accommodation necessary at all.

3. Coming to this:

**EdvinW posted:**

*I do believe the hand you choose to hold the harmonica makes a difference. I do not believe some ways are wrong and others are right*

Indeed, especially when cupping - as well as with other hand effects. Here I always choose the way working best for the very tune I want to play. Left, right, both hands, loose or dense cupping, beating, shaking, quivering and tilting of the harp and what else is possible. Especially when playing a big chrom or a Chordomonica or any other instrument with relatively low volume I newly developed a special style of cupping. I cover the descant side of the harp fully and quite densely on its backside with my right palm to damp its volume, while I leave the bass side fully open with its relatively low volume.

This fully enables the thumb to handle the slide. This is working even with the double slide of the Chordomonica. Funnily when I once took some lessons for the Chordomonica, the teachers tried to dissuade me from my "fatally wrong" technique proofed in decades' practice. They merely could not imagine that anyone could play this instrument like this at all.

And you easily can imagine that I gave a shit on their oldschool sermon. I just tried it once and realized at once that I would never reach my virtuosity with this at any time, concerning the holding of the instrument as well as the handling of the slides. It was merely impossible to play the instrument with this like I wanted to play it - at least to me. But I never have seen and heard anyone else to play it in my style anyway. So what?

dear greetings  
triona