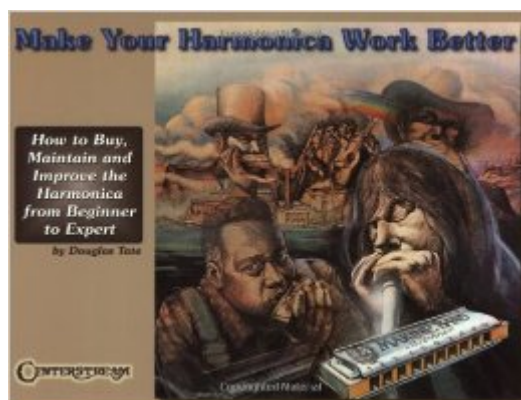


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# Make Your Harmonica Work Better



## Synopsis

(Harmonica). There is a vast amount of knowledge throughout the world about how to make the harmonica sound better and play better, but little of it is written down. This fully illustrated book solves the problem. It contains sections on: how to buy a harmonica, common problems, advice about tools and techniques for using them, the basic parts of the chromatic harmonica, solutions to improve sound and functionality, experimenting on old harmonicas, tuning, and much more. For chromatic players, but diatonic players will learn just as much.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (26 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Poor instruments was the major impediment to my ability to play harmonica. This book taught me how to turn a bad instrument into a great instrument and my skills as a musician have jumped ahead. This is a great book by a master of the subject. The book has two sections. One section for simple and easy things to do to improve the chromatic harmonica. These require only basic tools and experience. I've used almost all of Doug's simple modifications and they make an enormous difference. The other half of the book takes you deep into the jungle of customisation and is very complex but explained carefully and thoughtfully. The second half of the book will keep my busy for years and years. This is the most comprehensive book I've seen on maintenance and customisation of chromatic harmonicas. Doug is a well known and respected expert on harmonica improvements and customisation and construction. He has made and customised harmonicas for Larry Adler (who writes a forward for this book) and is frequently providing internet newsgroups with his excellent

advice. A perfect companion to this book is Doug's other book "Play the harmonica well" which teaches you how to play the harmonica - once you've used THIS book to make the instrument work properly! ;-)

Although it's not at all clear from the title or description, most of this book is about the cleaning and customization of chromatic harmonicas- the fancy ones with the slide- and not the simple diatonic harps that most people play. Some of the information is useful to diatonic players, but most is not. The chromatic info is useful, but of somewhat uneven quality and style. Tuning- one of the most useful mods a player can do- is covered in a very superficial manner. Some of the mods, like reshaping the internal channels in the comb, are discussed at length without a lot of explanation as to why one might want to bother. And many mods are presented with only the barest of details- certainly not enough to insure that the tyro doesn't destroy an expensive harmonica while learning how. As one reviewer has noted, far more information is out there on the web awaiting only a quick Google search. I'd do that before I considered buying this book.

I got this book because a couple of my harmonicas weren't working all that well, and I thought the book would help me get them back into shape. Much of the information here is available on the Net for free, and repairing and tuning a harmonica is like trying to write the Bible on a grain of rice. It can be done, but it's extremely difficult and time consuming. If you have a lot more time than money, this book "might" help you out. However, while you may be able to fix your car, build a deck, and even perform brain surgery, you'll soon find that repairing and tuning a harmonica is not as easy as this book makes it appear, regardless of how much patience you have. I give it three stars because it's informative, but those harmonicas I wanted to fix still aren't, and I'm usually very good at stuff like this.

This is a well-written and illustrated set of instructions on how to repair your harmonica. It has extensive information on the tools needed and details on the steps in procedures to fix and maintain a harmonica. I found the steps to accurately reflect what you need to do. It mainly focuses on chromatic harmonicas although the information works well for diatonic harmonicas also. There is much information on the details of how harmonicas work with great graphics. It also goes extensively into retuning or fixing the reeds. My only significant negative is that it misses the opportunity to list the frequencies of harmonica notes. If you are going to retune a reed, you really need that information. It's a shame to force you to have to look elsewhere to find it.

This book provides several trade secrets that are hard to find. Although some what dated it still applies today. If you have the bench skills required you can service your own harps and save a ton of money. The book is very helpful.

To be frank, I wasn't able to use a single procedure in all of this book and it quickly became a dust collector on my shelf. I should say that I have great respect for Mr. Tate (RIP). He was a consummate chromatic player (look him up on Youtube) and he could greatly improve the instrument with his techniques but these were above and beyond my capabilities and available free time. Also, having been written by an Englishman, the words used for tools and material needed to perform the work was kind of hard to translate into American hardware store speak. These are not do-it-yourself types of improvements. But then again can ANY work on a chromatic be done by mere mortals?

Why is there a picture of a Marine Band diatonic blues harp on the cover? Isn't the guy playing into the microphone on the cover playing a blues harp? Maybe the person who did the art work and the guy who wrote the book weren't talking to each other. This booklet is about chromatic harps and there isn't anything in it about blues harps (diatonic harps). The description says "diatonic players will learn just as much". I thought a couple of sections were kind of interesting, but I certainly didn't learn ANYTHING about the diatonic blues harp from this booklet. The booklet only cost five dollars, so I didn't expect much, which is a good thing.

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