

# HOW TO PLAY THE JAW HARP

1. Hold the jaw harp firmly in your left hand. (Right hand if more comfortable.)
2. Part your teeth slightly (about ½ inch.) Now press the jaw harp firmly against your front teeth. Teeth should be on the beveled edge, not biting down on the harp. Do not put your lips down over your teeth. Your teeth should be in direct contact with the metal.
3. While holding the harp firmly against your front teeth with your left hand, gently flick the metal twanger TOWARDS YOU with your right index finger. If you pull it TOWARDS YOU it cannot hit your teeth. You should get a sound.
4. **If you didn't get a sound you are probably:**
  - A. Holding the metal frame too lightly against your teeth. IT MUST BE FIRMLY AGAINST YOUR TEETH.
  - B. You have your lips over your teeth. Pull your lips back so your teeth touch the metal.
  - C. The metal twanger hit your tongue. Move your tongue to the back of your mouth.
  - D. You are pressing the metal frame of the harp together with your left hand and the metal twanger can't pass between the frame. Don't squeeze the frame too hard.
5. **To get more sound:**

Let your lips rest lightly on the metal frame out of the way of the metal twanger. This focuses the sound.
6. **To get different tones and sounds:**

Move your tongue around inside of your mouth. By moving your tongue back and forth you can make the cavity of your mouth larger or smaller. This changes the pitch of the note you are playing. The smaller the mouth cavity the higher pitched the note will be. The larger the cavity, the lower the note. Try playing a simple melody with this technique.
7. **Talk through the jaw harp:**

Try counting through the harp, that is, move your tongue as though you were saying "1, 2, 3," but without speaking the words. The jaw harp can talk! Experiment with sounds.

**8. Adding rhythm:**

You can make the jaw harp louder and play a rhythm by lightly breathing across it. Very lightly and slowly breath in and out. You won't hyperventilate if you do this slowly and evenly. You should notice a louder tone.

**9. Advanced rhythm technique:**

With your index finger pluck a steady rhythm on each beat of the tune.

Now add an IN and OUT breath (lightly) for each time you pluck the twanger with your finger.

Practice until this rhythm is very steady and then try adding a tune by moving your tongue to get the different notes. In this way you can play complicated tunes like, "Turkey in the Straw."

**TAKE YOUR TIME, ENJOY YOURSELF, AND HAVE FUN... THAT IS WHAT THE JAW HARP IS ALL ABOUT.**

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