

- While we're doing the vibrato exercises, it is vital to want to play them not only with the breath, the diaphragm, the throat or whatever else but also with the head. Imagine the vibrated note.
- In addition, let's remember that all the effects we can produce (vibrato, trills, tonguing, guttural sounds, bending, etc.) vary greatly depending on whether we're playing a chromatic or diatonic harmonica and depending on the different types of music. Just think of how different Toots Thielemans' vibrato is from Franz Chmel's. Harmonica instruction mustn't be reduced to a single model or a single sound.

BENDING

Bending is another very important subject for harmonica players.

Bending is an effect that allows us to modify the intonation of a note resulting in an impressive "sliding sound". Bending is of the utmost importance for those playing the diatonic harmonica. In fact, the diatonic harmonica makes up for its lack of all 12 notes of the chromatic scale by using bending and overbending to move notes a half-step, and in some cases, a whole-step or even a step and a half. This is done through the use of a particular technique that creates a kind of vortex of air that blocks the reed that we're drawing, for example, and sounds the reed that normally only sounds when blown. This subject is beyond the scope of this method book, as this type of bending cannot be done on the chromatic harmonica because, unlike the diatonic harmonica, the valves positioned on each reed act as an obstacle to producing this type of effect.

Bending on the chromatic harmonica has the principal aim of slightly lowering the intonation of the note that is being played, giving it a distinctive effect. In both blown and drawn notes, these elements apply:

- the tip of the tongue is arched and moved downward which consequently swells the inner part of the tongue more.
- the larynx is lowered (think of yawning)
- the entrance or exit of air is slightly forced

To do a bend on a drawn note, the larynx has to be lowered much more than when blowing. Touch your Adam's apple while inhaling; start forcing the air a bit to make a bend and you should clearly feel your Adam's apple drop.