

Breathing Exercise

10h

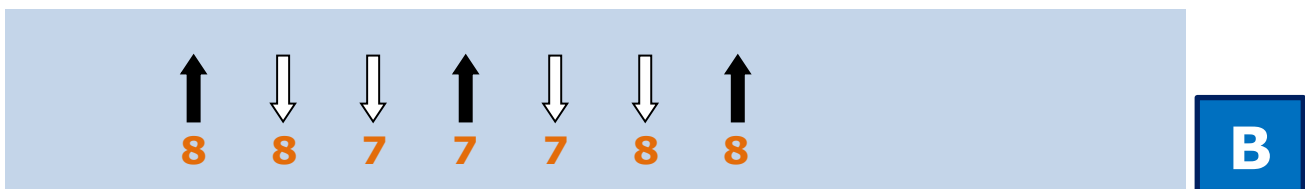
Start by familiarising with the pattern in each cycle. Start slowly, accenting the blow notes as you go (**one**-two-three-**four**-five-six). This will produce a Waltz Rhythm (**1**-2-3, **2**-2-3). When you are confident with the cycle, increase the tempo, but keep your delivery evenly balanced throughout.

Holes 7 and 6 cycle



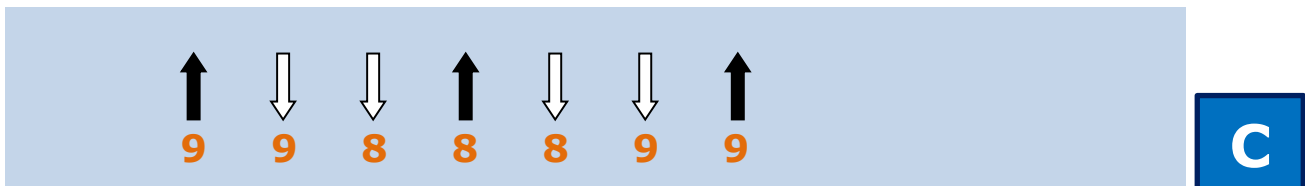
↑ 7 ↓ 7 ↓ 6 ↑ 6 ↓ 6 ↓ 7 ↑ 7

Holes 8 and 7 cycle



↑ 8 ↓ 8 ↓ 7 ↑ 7 ↓ 7 ↓ 8 ↑ 8

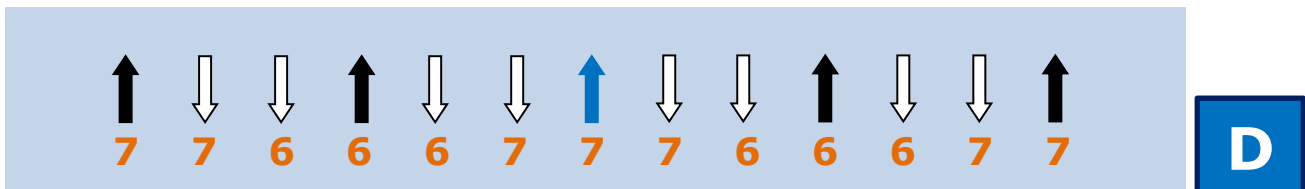
Holes 9 and 8 cycle



↑ 9 ↓ 9 ↓ 8 ↑ 8 ↓ 8 ↓ 9 ↑ 9

To increase the benefit of this exercise, we need to repeat each line. Start with holes 7 and 6 and follow the example in line D. This is one cycle and one repetition. When we play repetitions, we only play the return point in **7B** once. This is indicated by the **blue arrow**.

Holes 7 and 6 cycle repeated






















↑ 7 ↓ 7 ↓ 6 ↑ 6 ↓ 6 ↓ 7 ↑ 7 ↓ 7 ↓ 6 ↑ 6 ↓ 6 ↓ 7 ↑ 7

Once you are comfortable with one repetition, try 5 repetitions. Over time, build up to 10 repetitions, and notice how your diaphragm pushes when you play the blow notes. Notice also how your embouchure (lip and smile muscles) feel the burn as the repetitions increase. Do the same number of repetitions in every line; A, B and C. As the reeds become shorter, they become more resistant. The muscle burn and the benefit will increase too!

Time to increase the challenge by connecting all three lines into one extended cycle. This will take some time getting used to, so start slowly. If you remember to accent the blow notes as you play, these will act as markers so you won't get lost.

Holes 9 to 6 connected cycle

           	<p>9 9 8 8 8 7 7 7 6 6 6 7</p>	<div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 10px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">E</div>
      	<p>7 7 8 8 8 9 9</p>	<div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 10px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">F</div>

Once again, the objective is maintain control all the way through, delivering the whole sequence in a measure and evenly balanced way. When you can achieve this, try three whole cycles, then four, then five.

Next, try to challenge yourself by playing repetitions more quickly, building the tempo over time. This will benefit your breath control and embouchure immensely. Make a habit of starting every harmonica session with this valuable exercise, and play with your eyes closed. This will connect you with your breathing, your musical delivery and your instrument.