

## Octaving Exercises

If we play two immediately adjacent holes simultaneously, this is called a double stop. Interval playing is when we leave at least one dormant hole between the two target notes. This is achieved by blocking the unrequired hole with our tongue. In this respect, interval playing provides the bridge between puckering and full tongue blocking embouchure.

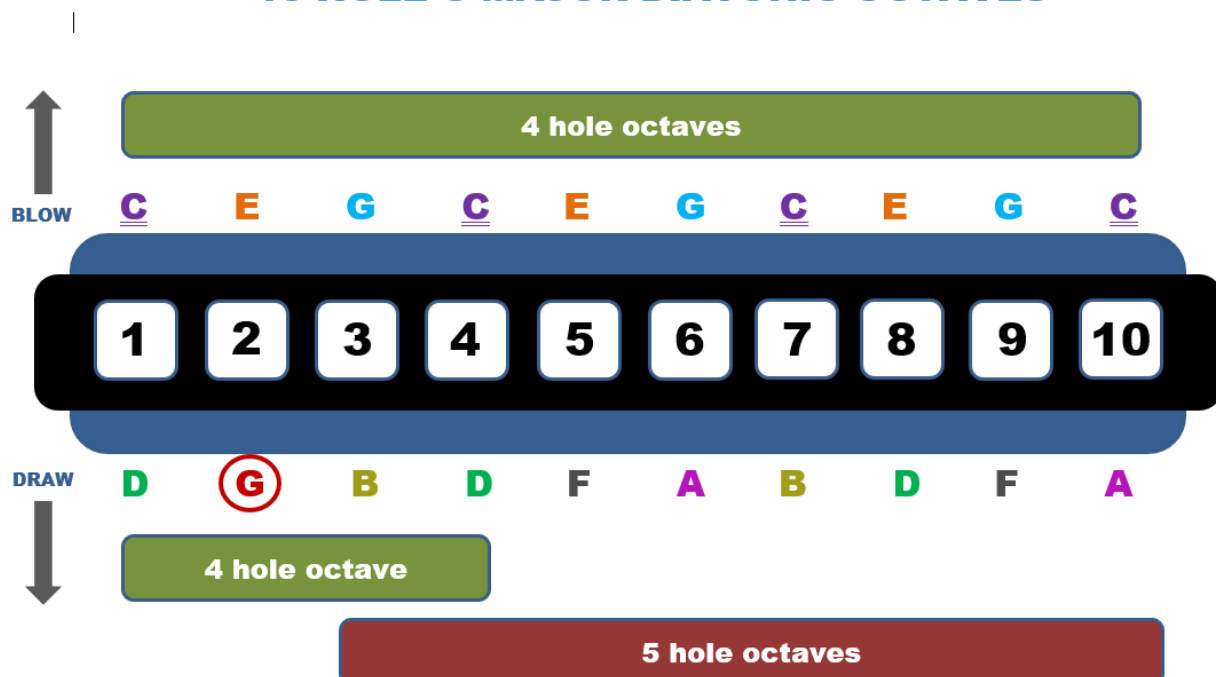
Interval playing typically covers a three, four or five hole spread of holes and is commonly referred to as note splitting, or simply splits. Where the two tones sounded are the same note an octave apart however, this form of interval playing is called octaving.

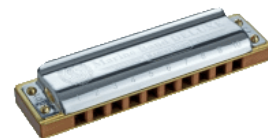
The function of octaving is to add texture, or richness of sound, to our playing. It's a way we can sound louder too. For an audience the result will appear monotone. The audience may remain unaware that two notes are actually being played. For the harmonica player, it's a useful device for bulking out our sound and adding character to our playing. It also enables us to mimic the sound of a single row melodican, or cajun squeeze box.

Octaving is also handy for determining whether our harmonica is in tune with itself. If our target notes produce a beating or tremolo effect, it may be worth fretuning the errant reed.

From the chart you can see that all our blow notes have an octave partner a four hole interval apart. For our draw notes this only applies to holes 1 and 4. Our remaining draw note octave partners have a five hole interval. Only 2 draw has no octave partner at all, hence the red circle.

### 10 HOLE C MAJOR DIATONIC OCTAVES





A useful way to accurately place octaves is by centring the end of your tongue on a hole divider for four hole octaves and in a hole for five hole octaves. Sliding the tip of the tongue between hole dividers or holes will help with transferring the required interval between target pairs. In this way it is possible to double up a trill when octaving too!

A final top tip is to ensure you do not widen your embouchure as you pass from the blown to the drawn four hole octave in holes 1 and 4.

## Key to tabs



**Draw**



**Blow**

**1=4**

**Play only the two holes shown. Block the holes between with your tongue.**

## Building a 4 hole interval embouchure



**1=4**



**1=4**

**Repeat this movement to establish your 4 hole interval embouchure. It should sound like one note.**

**1**

## Lateral transfer of a 4 hole interval



**1=4**



**2=5**



**1=4**

**Gently slide between the adjacent positions shown. Repeat this pattern to build muscle memory.**

**2**

## Diagonal 4 hole interval placement



**1=4**



**1=4**



**2=5**



**1=4**



**1=4**

**Learn to transfer and place your embouchure**

**3**

## Lateral 4 hole blow combinations



**1=4**



**2=5**



**3=6**



**4=7**



**5=8**

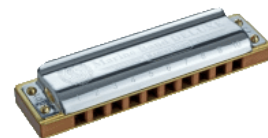


**6=9**



**7=10**

**4**



## Lateral 4 hole leaps

↑      ↑      ↑  
1=4    4=7    7=10

5

## Lateral 4 hole steps

↑      ↑      ↑      ↑      ↑      ↑  
1=4    3=6    2=5    4=7    3=6    5=8

6

↑      ↑      ↑      ↑  
4=7    6=9    5=8    7=10

Check out our Bugle Call exercises to supplement the exercises above.

## Building a 5 hole interval embouchure

↓      ↓      ↓  
3=7...3=7...3=7

Repeat this movement to establish your 5 hole interval embouchure. It should sound like one note.

7

## Lateral transfer of a 5 hole interval

↓      ↓      ↓  
3=7    4=8    3=7

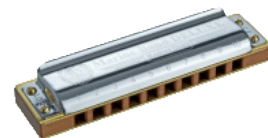
Gently slide between the adjacent positions shown. Repeat this pattern to build muscle memory.

8

## Lateral 5 hole blow combinations

↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓  
3=7    4=8    5=9    6=10    5=9    4=8    3=7

9



### Exercise 10: Lateral 5 hole steps

10

↓      ↓      ↓      ↓

3=7    5=9    4=8    6=10

↓      ↓      ↓      ↓

6=10   4=8    5=9    3=7

### Walking the octaves introduction

11

↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑

3=6   3=7   3=6   3=7   3=6   3=7   3=7

### Walking the octaves introduction

12

↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓

3=7   4=7   4=8   4=7   3=7   4=7   4=8   4=7   3=7

### Walking the octaves complete

13

↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑

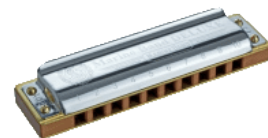
3=6   3=7   4=7   4=8   5=8   5=9   6=9   6=10   7=10

↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑    ↓    ↑

7=10   6=10   6=9   5=9   5=8   4=8   4=7   3=7   3=6

↑    ↓    ↑

2=5   1=4   1=4



## London Bridge

## Tradional

↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**6=9**   **6=10**   **6=9**   **5=9**   **5=8**   **5=:9**   **6=9**  
 Lon - don   bridge   is   fall - ing   down

**A**

↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**4=8**   **5=8**   **5=9**   **5=8**   **5=9**   **6=9**  
 Fall - ing   down,   fall - ing   down

**B**

↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**6=9**   **6=10**   **6=9**   **5=9**   **5=8**   **5=9**   **6=9**  
 Lon - don   bridge   is   fall - ing   down

**C**

↓      ↑      ↑      ↑  
**4=8**   **6=9**   **5=8**   **4=7**  
 My   fair   La - dy

**D**

## Peer Gynt Suite Theme

## Edvard Grieg

↑      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**6=9**   **5=8**   **4=8**   **4=7**   **4=8**   **5=8**

**A**

↑      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**6=9**   **5=8**   **4=8**   **4=7**   **4=8**   **5=8**   **4=8**   **5=8**

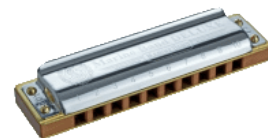
**B**

↑      ↑      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓  
**6=9**   **5=8**   **6=9**   **6=10**   **5=8**   **6=10**













**C**

↑      ↑      ↓      ↑  
**6=9**   **5=8**   **4=8**   **4=7**

**D**











### Four holes octave movement (Juke)

2..3..4..5   3=6..3=6   2..3..4..5   3=6..3=6

14



### Four holes octave movement (George Smith lick)


~3'..3=6   ~3'..3=6   ~3'..3=6   ~3'..3=6

15

### Four holes splits movement (Boogie Woogie)






3'..3   3=6   3=6   3'..3   2=5   2=5   *Repeat*

16

### Four holes splits movement (Slow Blues)



















2   ~3..1=4..3=6..2=5...flutter   ~4.....gliss...2..2..







17

### Four holes splits & slaps movement (Shuffle)

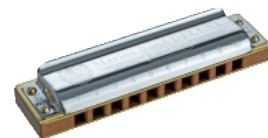










2=5..2=5..2=5   2=5..2=5   1=4..1=4   2=5..2=5

18

2=5..2=5   2=5..2=5   1=4..1=4



## Four holes splits & slaps movement (Shuffle)

**2=5..3=6..2=5..1=4**    **2=5..3=6..2=5..1=4..1=4**

19

**~3-4..2 2 2..2 2..1 2 2''..1=4..1=4..**

## Star Wars Theme

John Williams

**1=4 3=6 2=5 2=5 1=4 4=7 3=5**

A

**2=5 2=5 1=4 4=7 3=5**

Note that 2=5 is a dissonant 4 hole interval, or split

B

**2=5 2=5 2=5 1=4**

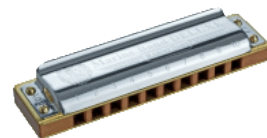
C

**2=5 2=5 1=4 2=5 2=5 1=4**

D

**6'... 6..6'..6 5..4..**

E



↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
**2=5 2=5 1=4 2=5 2=5 1=4**

**F**

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
**3=6..3=6..3=6 3=6..3=6..3=6 3=6..3=6..3=6**

**G**

### Excerpt from Double Crossed & Blue by Steve Baker

#### Section 3 ● staccato

● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ● ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
**4=8 4=8 6=10 4=8 4=8 4=8 4=8 3=7..4=8**

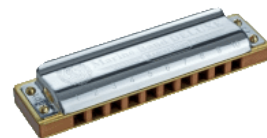
↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓  
**5=9..5=8..4=8.. 4=8..5=8 5=9.. 5=8.. 5=9..5=8**

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
**4=8 4=7 6 6..5 6..6'..6..5..6..6..5..4..5**

↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑  
**4..5..6 6'..8..6'..6..5 6....6' 5..4 4..3''..3'''..3**

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
**1 2''..1..gliss..4**





Note from the above excerpt how five hole octaves lend themselves to third position playing. transfer this idea to a chromatic harmonica and you will find this is where the two instruments share a common technique. It's what makes blues accessible on the chromatic harmonica.

Be aware however that the likes of Little Walter also used 4 hole splits on the chromatic harmonica. Try this out too.

Finally, when you play regular cross harp blues in second position, think about adding in four hole octaves on your blow notes. This is what Little Walter does at the top of his intro run on Juke. Consider also how 5 hole octaves can provide a new avenue of expression over the V chord when playing second position cross harp.