

# What Every Harpist Needs to Know to Maintain Their Harp

Provided by: **Karen Gottlieb** Harpist-Teacher-Harp Technician [kgharp@pacbell.net](mailto:kgharp@pacbell.net)  
Lyon-Healy & Salvi Certified Harp Technician <https://www.harptechguild.com>  
[www.kgharp.com](http://www.kgharp.com)

*The following information can be learned from your teacher, fellow harpists, on various websites or on the handouts provided.*

- 1 - Store your harp away from direct sunlight = between 50-86 F. degrees
- 2 - Know How to Restring your harp properly
  - Know how to tie a knot on nylon and gut strings
  - Know how to wind strings onto the tuning pin
  - Know how to put on a wire string!
  - Be sure string ends are NOT touching inside the harp to avoid buzzes
- 3 - Know When to Change Strings - based on your level & how often you play...
  - Top 2 octaves - yearly (esp. nylon strings)
  - 3rd-5th oct Gut strings - every 1-3 years
  - Wires - every 1-3 years
- 4 - Know How to Tune Your Harp. Use a tuner.
  - Pedal harp - Always tune in the flat position with the discs unengaged
  - Lever harp - Always tune with the levers unengaged
  - Be sure to push in (towards neck) on tuning pins as you tune to keep them tight
- 5 - Tuning Key = your most valuable tool. The ergonomic tuning keys are easiest on the hand and come in fun colors.
- 6 - Know how to move your harp with and without a dolly
  - Know how to load your harp safely into a car
- 7 - Know How to Clean your harp - use a soft or slight damp cloth.
- 8 - Know when to have your harp regulated - helps with noise control and intonation.
  - Professionals - every 1-2 years
  - Non-professionals - every 2-3 years
- 9 - Be sure that your harp is fully insured for any damage
  - Non-Professional - a special rider on your homeowner's policy will work.
  - Professional Insurance: <https://harp society.org/resources/ahsinsurance.html>

*The following are great things to know, esp. for professional harpists...BUT only if you have had instruction on how to do them. It is best NOT to try fixing any problems unless you fully understand the process. The harp has 2,000 moving parts all highly interconnected.*

*Consult your technician if you have a problem or issue before attempting any repairs.*

- 1 - Changing your pedal felts and slot felts
- 2 - Changing and replacing a broken disc
- 3 - Greasing of pedal spring coils when squeaking
- 4 - Changing a broken Pedal Rod = *only for the very brave....*