



d'Aigle Autoharps & Folk Instruments
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Felt Changing Tips

- Remove the chord bar covers and place the chords in order on the table or work bench.
- It may be a good idea to mark the bars (not the old felt) at the locations of the strings that are open on each bar. Do this with a dry-erase or similar non-permanent marker.
- Remove all felt and adhesive residue from bars. They don't have to be perfect, but should be flat with no bumps. After pulling off the felt with my hands, or cutting it with a utility knife, I scrape the bars (with a scraping rather than cutting motion) with the blade held flat on the bars. Some folks use a little lighter fluid or similar solvent to remove the adhesive. I don't recommend it. But if you do use a solvent, be careful, and steer away from using an oily solvent such as WD40. You will want a clean surface for the new felts to adhere to.
- For 12 or 15 bar Oscar Schmidt and similar 'harps, apply new felt strips allowing the felt to hang over the end of the bars just slightly. This helps keep the bars from making noise against the bar covers. Trim the excess length, and test for proper fit.
- For 21 bar Oscar Schmidt and similar 'harps, apply the felts to the bars centered on the bar, leaving approximately 5/16" of bare bar at each end. This dimension varies, so check the old felts before removing, and test the new for proper fit.
- All other 'harps, follow the maker's recommendations or simply copy the existing felt pattern.
- This next step should be observed even if you have marked the old felt placement already. Rechecking will prevent mistakes. Place each bar, one at a time, in the same slot where it will be placed. With a fine marker, mark the felt precisely at the locations of the strings that will be open and ringing with that chord.
- At the location of the mark, cut the felt at an angle, starting at a little more than 1/16" on each side of the marks. This forms a "V" notch

for the string to ring. The V also gives the felt added strength.



- **TIP:** Use a sharp utility knife and push the blade straight down (don't slice) through the felt.
- The cut felt will look something like this:

_____ /.\ _ /.\ _____ /.\ _____ Etc.
(Shows notched felt. Dots are the strings.)

- Try each chord bar as you go. Adjustments can be made, pieces of felt can be removed carefully and reinstalled if you make small mistakes.
- A tiny drop of rubber cement, wood glue or contact cement can be



- used to reattach a wayward felt piece.
- When should you change the felts? Old (especially softer) felts can become very ragged or loose and begin to interfere with strings. More commonly, they will become grooved, requiring too much pressure to achieve even dampening.
- New felts will be much easier to play!