



FILISKO'S BLOCKING INSIGHTS - 8/6/13

Blocking (*tongue blocking or T-blocking*) is an embouchure (*positioning of the mouth-- lips & tongue*) used when playing the harmonica whereas some part of the tongue blocks or covers one or more or ALL the holes encircled by the lips and preventing them from sounding. Blocking is essential for getting the most sound and the biggest sounds out of the harmonica. NOTE: *While tongue curling or "U" blocking is indeed blocking, it does not easily lend itself to many of the advantages.*

"9" REASONS FOR USING BLOCKING:

1. SPLITS / OCTAVES are possible - Essential part of TECHNIQUE TONE.
2. VAMPING / SLAPPING becomes easily accessible - Standard and SBW2 (pull slaps)
Adds percussion, rhythmic drive and punch - Essential part of TECHNIQUE TONE.
3. CHORDAL EFFECTS - Rapid Vamping (*on & off*) and Tongue Shakes (*side to side*)
Most powerful and unforgettable part of TECHNIQUE TONE.
4. HEAD TONE is superior - Tongue is positioned in mouth for better resonance.
5. HAND TONE is superior - Harp will sit deeper in your mouth making it easier to position hands against face for tightest and most resonant hand cup.
6. TRANSITIONS between the "Types of Sound", chords, splits and clean & dirty notes are instant and seamless - Shuffle vamping - Accompaniment vamping (*sounds like 2 harps*)
7. SWITCHING - Double embouchure playing (*2 mouths*) Always switch for hole #1
8. SENSE OF TOUCH - Tongue becomes like your fingers allowing for you to feel where you are and more accurately position your mouth over the holes.
9. GAG REFLEX - We are all born with it and it is the #1 killer of tone! Blocking helps to keep it in check by keeping the tongue busy enhancing the sound and tone instead of squashing it.

"3" DISADVANTAGES FOR USING BLOCKING:

1. Not practical to obtain certain tongueing articulations on notes. (*duh-dle-luh, & di-dle-duh-dle*)
2. More saliva and friction issues - Don't lean forward!
3. Can be hard to control because you can't see what it is doing. Check out the Filisko TBT !!!
4. Bending ??? Questionable! If you have spent more time practicing bending while puckering, you will NOT be able to bend as skillfully until you have practiced enough while blocking!

YOU DON'T GENERALLY USE BLOCKING WHEN PLAYING CHORDS. A "chord" is the notes that sound when you remove or lift your tongue.

USE BLOCKING FOR EVERYTHING ELSE - (*short of tongueing articulations*) Work towards playing with the harp as deep as possible & practical in your mouth. This will put you on the fast track for the biggest tone! When in doubt, keep your tongue on the harp. While it has been commonly said since the 1960's that bending is not possible while blocking, you can rest assured that this is certainly NOT true!