

Dusty Strings

REPLACING EYELETS

Loose Eyelets

The eyelets on your harp are pressed into place when the harp is built, and they stay in place with friction, not glue. They can, over the years, become loose. This is because changes in humidity and temperature cause the wood of the soundboard to expand and contract at a different rate than the metal of eyelets. They can also be loosened when threading and pulling a new string through the soundboard. If there is a loose eyelet, you can simply press it back into place. It's a good idea to check after replacing a string to make sure the eyelet is still fully seated. If not, take the tension off the string, then hold the eyelet in place to make sure the flange stays flush with the soundboard while you bring the string back up to tension.

A loose eyelet can usually be dealt with by simply pushing the eyelet back into place. If it persists in being loose, you can glue it in place with epoxy putty. This is available at hardware stores and comes in two parts that you knead together when you are ready to use it. Following the instructions on the package, combine the two parts to make a tiny ball of kneaded putty and use a toothpick to stick it onto the inside of the hole. Then gently press the eyelet in so that the epoxy fills the extra space between the eyelet and the too-large hole. It shouldn't take much epoxy to make a difference, but make sure it doesn't all squish out the bottom! As soon as you press the eyelet in, clean up any epoxy from the surface of the harp with a soft cloth. Also check to see if there is any epoxy on the inside of the eyelet. If so, clean it out with a toothpick or a pipe cleaner. Let the epoxy cure for the full amount of time recommended on the package before you put the string back on.

Cracked Eyelets

The eyelets are solid brass and can crack over time as a result of atmospheric corrosion and stress. If you see any cracked eyelets it is best to replace them as soon as possible. If left in place, the string will eventually push through the crack and start to dig into the wood of the soundboard.

Since they are simply pressed into place, you can often just pry or push the cracked eyelets out of the soundboard. For stubborn eyelets, you can use a #1 screw extractor (or Easy Out) to help. If the cracked section is displaced, you'll first need to use a screwdriver to tap it back into place so the eyelet is round again and can twist in its hole. Then, using a crescent wrench to grip and turn the Easy Out, twist it counterclockwise into the eyelet from the front. When it starts to grip, keep twisting while you pull upwards, and the eyelet should come out.

Take a moment to inspect the hole it came out of. If the hole is still round, a new eyelet can be pressed firmly in following the previous instructions for loose eyelets.

If the hole has become oblong or misshapen, you will need to repair it to provide proper support for the string under tension and prevent the replacement eyelet from cracking right away. The easiest method we have found is to use epoxy putty, which is available at most hardware stores. Follow the directions on the package to knead the two parts together into a small ball. Then, press the ball of putty underneath the lip of the eyelet (the part that sits on top of the soundboard). Position the eyelet so that when you press it into the hole, the ball of putty will fill the void. Immediately use a soft cloth or paper towel to clean up any epoxy that squishes out onto the soundboard and make sure the inside of the eyelet is clear of epoxy. Let the epoxy cure for the full amount of time recommended on the package before you put the string back on.

Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.