

Replacing Autoharp Chord Bar Felts

Replacing the felt on autoharps can be difficult if it is your first time servicing your autoharp you may want to seek the help of someone that is experienced in refelting autoharps. Generally, when it is necessary to replace felt on a chord bar, the rest of the felts on that bar should be replaced at the same time. If you follow the simple instructions below, you should be able to replace the felt in no time at all. The same procedure can be used for making your own special chord bars. Replacing chord bar felts can be difficult. You may find purchasing a chord conversion kit for the model autoharp that you have. The kit includes new bars that are already felted and labeled with the appropriate chords.

****PLEASE READ COMPLETELY BEFORE STARTING!****

1. For a 15 chord Autoharp you will have to remove the 6 screws holding the chord bar rails in place. For a 21 chord Autoharp you will have to remove the chord bar cover. With the Autoharp lying flat on a table or counter, remove the chord bars on which you want to replace the existing felts or change the felts to create a new chord. Place the chord bar at the end of the chord bar holders so that it is lined up as if it were in place.

Hint: For 21 chord models you may want to place a piece of masking tape over the chord buttons to keep them in order.

2. Take a pencil and make a mark on the side of the chord bar (on the metal) exactly where the strings that should sound for that chord are located. Make the mark dark enough so you will be able to locate it later. (See figure 1)

3. Peel off the old felts, either by pulling them off with your fingers, or by running a sharp knife between the metal and felt. A sharp flat razor, such as a Stanley Razor Knife, or an Exacto knife will work best.

4. After all the old felt is removed, take a piece of very fine sandpaper, emery paper or steel wool and clean off any residue left by the old adhesive. Be sure you don't clean away your pencil marks! Wipe bar off with clean paper towel.

5. Take one strip of self-sticking Autoharp felt and carefully peel off the paper that covers the adhesive backing. **BE CAREFUL- DON'T PEEL OFF ADHESIVE!**

6. Very carefully place the felt, adhesive side down, on the cleaned chord bar, letting an equal amount of felt protrude on both ends. Once you have the felt lined up straight on the chord bar, press it firmly to seat the adhesive. Turn the chord bar over and place the felt side down on a flat surface, such as a table or countertop, and press it down firmly. This will squeeze out any air bubbles between the metal and felt. (See figure 2)

7. Take a very sharp knife, such as a Stanley Razor Knife, and Exacto knife or a single edge razor blade, and make a cut in the felt exactly 1/8" on both sides of the pencil mark in a V shape. This will make it easier to remove when re-felting, yet provides good strength and stability. Using the point on the blade, carefully pick out the 1/4" piece of felt you just cut. If the adjoining felt starts to lift up, press it back down and make your cut deeper. You can't hurt the metal part of the bar with the blade.

(See figure3)

Hint: If felt begins to lift up use a little bit of hot glue to secure the felt back in place.

8. Proceed to the next mark and repeat the procedure in Step 7. Continue until all the felts that you marked have been cut out.

9. If you have a 12 or 15 chord or Wildwood Flower model Autoharp, place the chord bar you have just finished back on top of the chord bar holder and determine how much of the excess felt needs to be cut off to make the bar fit snugly into the holder while still working easily. You may not have to cut any off, but if you do, make the piece longer then shorter. (It is always easier to take more off then to have to put it back on!)

10. If you have a 21 chord Autoharp, cut the felt off at 3/8" in from each end of the bar.

Figure 1

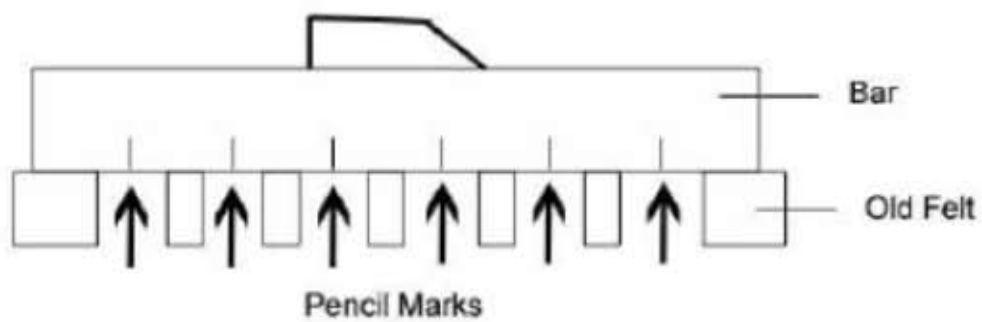


Figure 2

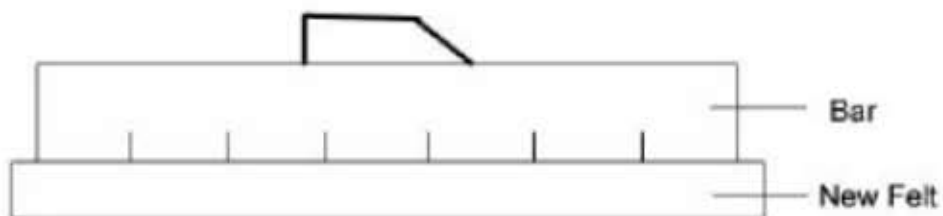


Figure 3

