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Moving Harps

Put the pedals up first. Put the padded cover on, and leave a gap where you can get your hand in to grip the column. If I have to pick up the harp, I need another person to help me. Tip the harp forward with one hand gripping the column and the other arm over the neck and grasping the harp under the brass plate that follows the curve on the pins' side. (Depending on which way you are going, you can be facing forward or backward.) Your helper picks up the bottom end of the harp either by the feet or under the edge of the base; wherever it is comfortable. Make sure you feel like the harp is balanced between you before you start moving.

If you have to go downstairs, the bottom of the harp should be on the downward end. The helper will have to go down the stairs backwards, looking behind him. The person on the upper end should always be facing the direction that you are heading. So, if you are going upstairs, both of you are facing up the stairs, and if you are going downstairs, you are facing each other. Some people take the harp downstairs while it is strapped to a dolly. If the wheels are large enough, this works fine, but you need one person at the bottom to make sure the harp doesn't get out of control. The harp gets "bumped" a bit, but many harpists move their harps like this all the time, and the harps are fine. If you can find ramps, they are much easier to use, and most public buildings in Canada have them now for wheelchairs.

I carry around a square of carpet or plastic to protect the harp's feet from the pavement when I have to put it down. When my helper and I get the harp to the car, we put it down on the square of carpet, then turn it so that the column is facing to the driver's side of the car. This is important! The levers or discs must be facing up, or they will be at risk of being damaged. Both people gently tip it into the car while facing each other on opposite sides of the harp. One person picks up the bottom of the harp and gently slides it into the car. The padded cover will protect it from scrapes. Place pillows around the harp to prevent it from sliding around while the car is moving. If you move your harp alone, get a large sheet of plywood that fits the back of your car and the harp, and staple or glue a cushioned piece of vinyl to it. You can slide it part-way into the car, wood side down, with the edge touching the pavement, lie the harp on it, pick up the plywood sheet, and slide it all in together. This will protect your harp from scraping.

It can also be column-loaded if it is securely held on both sides and cannot fall over. I tip the top end of the harp onto the car, while holding onto the harp carefully, then I climb in with it while the helper picks up the base and we both guide it into position. Some people have designed ingenious guidance systems that make it possible for one person to do this easily.

If you are taking the harp out for performing, the music stand, bench and bag of strings, music, etc. can be placed beside the harp as long as there are pillows or something soft to cushion the harp from being bumped.