

Flute Guide

for

Woodwind Methods

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I.

Embouchure

It is a simultaneous smile, frown and pucker. Use as much of the inner red part of the lip as possible. (as if you're trying to turn your lips inside out) Think of tasting a lemon with a frown. The corners pulling back and down slightly and the center of the lips trying to pucker forward. This will give you the aperture that you want.

Throat

Keep the throat open in "Ha" position (like yawning) Blow warm air.

Breathing

Stomach muscles press against the resistance of the diaphragm. Use the same muscles involved in panting, coughing and clearing your throat.

(I.e.) Sit in a chair, hold onto the seat, lean forward while pulling your shoulders down and take a breath. This can also be demonstrated by blowing against your thumb.

Starting a tone

All notes whether started softly right at the very threshold of sound or loudly with an abrupt attack, begin with a squeeze-thrust from the stomach muscles.



*Do not use the tongue. Use only the stomach muscles to generate the sound.

II.

Blowing into the Headjoint

Cover the open end of the headjoint with the palm of your right hand to make it air-tight. Bring the lip plate to the lower lip, where the red of your lip meets the chin. The headjoint will be parallel with your lips. You should see only about 40% of the hole on the lip plate. Bring your lips together and blow across the hole. When you get a healthy sound, continue without covering the end of the headjoint with your hand. This should be done in front of a mirror. Be sure that your nose, the indentation above your upper lip, and the aperture all line up horizontally with the embouchure hole.

It will form an upside-down "T". Occasionally, you will meet a student who has an aperture that is not in the center. Their natural opening is off center, often to the left. Consequently, they must adjust the embouchure hole to their aperture. This situation should not stop anyone from playing. There are some flute players who play very well, in spite of this phenomenon.

III.

Holding the Flute

Three pressure points:

1. left index finger
2. bottom lip or chin
3. right thumb

*It is very helpful to establish good hand position with the proper balance by introducing third line Bb as their first note.

*The right hand should be in a similar position to picking up a pencil.

Proper stance

It's important to face 1:00 (one o'clock) and adjust the upper torso. We can not square a music stand or face straight ahead and maintain proper access to the airstream as can be done with other instruments.

IV.**Connecting notes & intervals****ASCENDING**

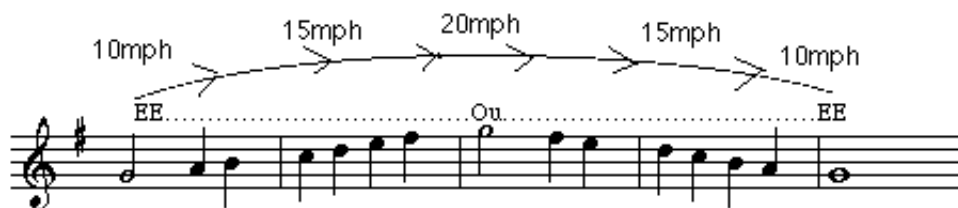
1. Lips - from EE to OU

2. Jaw - pivots out, following lips

3. Stomach muscles - press in, increasing the speed of air on the lower note to the necessary speed of air of the top note, before leaving lower note

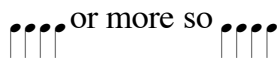
**DESCENDING**

The same as above applies, but in reverse. However, due to the lack of resistance when descending, a quicker shift is required. A little nibble or a quick drop of the jaw to catch the note is required a split second before the lower partial is achieved.

**G Major Scale Ascending and Descending****V.****Tonguing & Articulation**

The tongue hits the gum just above the top teeth. "tu" or "ta"

the back part of the tongue should be stationary in an "ou" position. "haa-tu-tu-tu-tu." Only the front part of the tongue moves. For very soft and subtle legato tonguing, use "doo".



Staccato Tonguing

The tongue still touches the same part of the gum. However, the air and stomach muscles play a much more important roll.

Practice stomach or belly kicks:

Ha Ha Ha Ha



The tone should be stopped only by the interruption of the air stream, not the tongue. Once you get a good staccato with the stomach kicks "ha", then add the tongue or the "t".

Ta Ta Ta Ta



as if saying "Tee" or "Tomorrow" or "Tom". Accent the "T" with air kicks from your stomach.

*Another technique to aid in achieving good articulation is to hypothetically spit a small particle, such as a rice seed, off the tip of your tongue. Stick the tip of your tongue in the aperture, release and kick the air out.

As the tempo increases, so must the speed and efficiency of the articulation. The stomach kick must become smaller and faster (stomach jabs). At greater tempos the single tongue is no longer effective, so we begin to double tongue.

Tuh Kuh Tuh Kuh or Da Ga Da Ga (softer, faster)

Dee Kee Dee Kee (only for very soft and fast passages with the tongue back in "EE" position.)

VI.

Vibrato

Vibrato is an even undulation of sound (pitch, volume and quality), varying from about 3-7 pulses per second and averaging around 5.

Since the stomach vibrato is limited in speed, the vibrato shifts up into the throat (larynx) at faster speeds.

Sustain a long spoken "ah" sound without the flute. Cut the sound off by closing the throat, keep the air pressed, then quickly open your throat. It's sort of like a whispered cough. (Glottal attack)

*Practice staccato quarter notes as above. When you can do this successfully, repeat the exercise only closing the throat slightly.


While keeping the airstream pressed, the stomach muscles will respond naturally with the throat.

Vibrato Exercises

PRACTICE STOMACH & THROAT VIBRATO SEPERATELY

Ha

Stomach kicks 

Throat articulations  (staccato, but no tongue)

The throat starts the sound from a completely closed position and is supported by and abdominal thrust. (whispered cough or glottal attack)

The most common and preferred vibrato is the combination of these. The air pressing through, the throat partially closing and the diaphragm (stomach muscles) responding naturally to both.

*Practice scales with a metronome at varying speeds, using 3,5 & 6 pulses per quarter note.

i.e. 3 pulses at 92 m.m.

5 pulses at 63 m.m.

Publications

A Beginner's Book for Flute Vol. I & II
-Trevor Wye

Modern Course for Flute Vol I & II
-Robin Hegvik

Rubank Method
-Voxman

Sixty Rambles for Flute
-Leon Lester, Edited by Kenton Terry

Suzuki Vol. I

Melodious & Progressive Studies for Flute, Book I
-Southern

Forty Pieces in Progressive Order for Beginning Flutists
-L. Moyse

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