

HOW TO PRODUCE A NICE TONE...

... On the Flute

Embouchure Formation:

Using the head joint alone, in front of a mirror ...

- Hold the head joint with the tone hole against the lips. The hole should be centered.
- Roll the joint forward until the tone hole is parallel with the floor, with the lower lip covering $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the hole.
- Keeping the lower lip relaxed, pull the corners of the mouth back slightly to firm the upper lip.
- Allow the center of the upper lip to relax as to produce a diamond-shaped opening. Imagine spitting out watermelon seeds or drinking through a straw.
- The internal shape of your mouth should be open, as though you were yawning, or as though you were holding a golf ball in the back (to produce an open “Aah” sound)
- When you produce a tone, the air stream should form a “V” of condensation that is centered in the middle of the tone hole.
- Practice focusing your air stream by blowing while moving your finger straight out from your chin – imagine you are blowing out a candle
- While playing, if you need to adjust the pitch of a note, never roll the flute. If you want to lower the pitch (make it flatter), move your jaw back slightly. If you want to raise the pitch (make it sharper), move your jaw forward slightly.

... On the Clarinet

Embouchure Formation:

- Keeping the lips lightly together, drop the lower jaw so that the teeth are slightly separated.
- Shape your mouth to say “Eu”. Your tongue should be in a high position.
- Practice focusing your air stream by blowing while moving your finger straight out from your chin – imagine you are blowing out a candle
- Turn the corners of your mouth DOWN to make the biggest “out ever!
- Insert the mouthpiece. Contract the lips around the mouthpiece so that no air can escape.
- Upper teeth rest, but do not press, on the top of the mouthpiece in line with the point where the reed and mouthpiece touch. *Use a tooth cushion!*
- The lower teeth support the lower lip and must not bite!
- The chin is held in a firm, flat position with a slight downward pull.
- **TUNE IN THE OCTAVE IN WHICH YOU PLAY!** If you play most of the time in the upper register (1sts), then tune your upper B flat (the upper range is naturally #)! If you play most of the time in the lower register (3rds), then tune your lower B flat (the lower range is naturally flat).
- Articulation: imagine a “thee” or “thou” shape to the inside of your mouth.
- Never swab your mouthpiece! Tap moisture into the palm of your hand. Clean out the corners with a Q-Tip. Always remove the reed from the mouthpiece when you’re finished playing and keep it in a Ziploc bag to maintain it’s moisture.

Using the mouthpiece and barrel alone, you should produce an F#.

... On the Oboe or Bassoon

Embouchure Formation:

Using the reed alone, you should “Crow” a B flat (Oboe) / C# (Bassoon). Speak to a professional first if you want to play one of these instruments!

... On the Saxophone

Embouchure Formation:

- Keeping the lips lightly together, drop the lower jaw so that the teeth are slightly separated.
- Shape your mouth to say "O". The internal shape of your mouth should be open, as though you were yawning, or that you were holding a golf ball in the back (to produce an open "Oh" sound)!
- The air quality you want to produce through your instrument is "warm". Think of how you blow into your hands to warm them up on a cold day. That's the kind of air you want to produce.
- Insert the mouthpiece. Contract the lips around the mouthpiece so that no air can escape.
- Upper teeth rest, but do not press, on the top of the mouthpiece in line with the point where the reed and mouthpiece touch.
- With the teeth open and the lips in the "O" position, the rim of the lower lip should be directly in front of the top edge of the lower teeth.
- Insert the mouthpiece. Contract the lips around the mouthpiece so that no air can escape.
- The corners of the mouth should be contracted slightly inward.
- The lower teeth support the lower lip and must not bite!
- The chin is held in a firm, flat position with a slight downward pull

Using the mouthpiece alone, you should produce an A (Alto) / F# (Tenor) / Eb (Baritone)

... On the Horn

Embouchure Formation:

- Your "lip line" should be approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way down the mouthpiece.
- The corners of the lips should pull in.

... On the Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium (Baritone) or Tuba

Embouchure Formation:

- Your "lip line" should be $\frac{1}{2}$ of the way down (centered on) the mouthpiece.
- The corners of the lips should pull in.
- There should be very little lip pressure on the mouthpiece. Support your sound with air; *don't force it* with your lips. The mouthpiece will rest parallel with the teeth through the lips. This is why it is important to keep the bell of your instrument up in front of you.
- Practice focusing your air stream by blowing while moving your finger straight out from your chin – imagine you are blowing out a candle
- **Practice tone production using the mouthpiece alone. You cannot play anything on the instrument well until you can play it on the mouthpiece well!**
- Hold the mouthpiece at the end of the shaft with your thumb and index finger.
- *Fuzzy buzzing* is a result of too little lip flesh (lips are too thin) in the embouchure.
- *Fart sounds* are a result of too much lip flesh (lips are too thick) in the embouchure.
- Buzzing should be clear and well supported. Air Pressure is needed for all notes, especially in the upper range.
- As you get higher in the range, the lips will thin and become firmer. More air pressure is needed.
- As you get lower in the range, the lips will thicken and become less firm. Less air pressure is needed.

A huge air volume is always required. Air "speed" determines dynamics.

Lip Slurs are your best friend.

... On a Drum

- Always play in the center of the head, unless *specifically directed* to do otherwise
- Keep your stick heights even
- Increase or decrease stick height (and therefore speed) to affect dynamics
- Keep your fingers loose on the sticks and remember the pivot points

... On a Guitar or Bass Guitar

- Always place your fingers at the front of the fret (towards the body of the instrument)
- Try to keep your thumb parallel to the back of the neck
- Keep the fingers of your left hand bent (except for barre chords, of course...)

... On a Stand-up Bass

- While sitting or standing up straight, let your right arm and hand drop naturally at rest. The hand should be in a relaxed, curved position, palm facing the hip.
- Place the frog of the bow in the right hand, the front curve of the frog at the tip of the thumb. The thumb should remain curved and rest gently in the front curve of the frog. It should not bend backwards or stick through to the other side of the bow. The left side of the fleshy part of the index finger near the furthest knuckle should reach slightly forward on the stick. The other three fingers should remain slightly curved with the fleshy part of the fingertips resting on the frog. The hand should remain relaxed.
- The full weight of the arm, the hand and the bow should rest on the string. There is no real need to grip the bow and the right hand can remain completely relaxed, allowing the right arm and hand to be dead weight. This weight is all that is necessary and that there is no need to press the bow onto the string.
- The energy to move the bow across the string comes from the larger muscles in the upper arm; this movement initiates in the upper arm.
- Start a back and forth swinging in the arm (similar to walking) by pushing back and forth. The arm and hand should remain relaxed and the inertia of the hand and forearm should keep the hand lagging behind the upper arm. If the hand and forearm are ahead of the upper arm, the upper arm is not acting as the driving force and the arm cannot remain relaxed.