



OBOE BASICS

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Putting Together the Oboe

- Dip the reed in clean water and set in a safe place for 2 minutes to hydrate. Do not oversoak.
- Start by turning the bell and middle joint together while avoiding pressing keys. Be observant of the "bridge" keys between the joints. Add the top joint in the same manner, lining up the bridge keys on the right side (as playing) of the oboe. Use this same twisting motion to take joints apart after playing.
- Put the reed fully into the reed well (use cork grease and twisting motion if tight). Reeds must always fit flush at the bottom of the well. Oboists cannot "pull out" the reed to adjust pitch. To protect the reed while taking it out, hold the reed while twisting/pulling the oboe. Always swab the oboe after playing.
- Hand position: gently curved fingers and thumbs (form a letter "C" with the hands), rounded pads of fingertips touch the keys. LH thumb anchors on the oboe just below the back octave key. Half-hole motion (LH index finger) uses a small, fluid slide/shift.

Breathing

- Stick out the stomach while breathing in through the mouth. The throat should be relaxed "tubular" to efficiently pull air into the lungs. While playing, engage stomach muscles to flex inward and direct air through the oboe.
- Oboe Fun Fact: Oboists need to exhale stale air before inhaling fresh air. In a phrase, pick a longer rest and exhale/inhale at one time, or locate two close rests, exhaling on the first, playing, and then inhaling on the second.

Embouchure and Pitch

- Whistle to bring corners in and flatten the chin, then position lips on the ridge of the teeth (not wrapped around). Set reed on bottom lip.
- On the reed alone, play pitches C-Bb-Ab by expelling the reed slightly with the lips to create lower pitches. These pitches respectively provide the embouchure support needed for high (A5 and above), middle (A4 to Ab5), and low (Ab4 and below) registers.
- Checking C-Bb-Ab embouchures, apply faster air to raise pitch, and slower air to lower pitch.

Articulation

- Tip of the tongue touches the tip of the reed.
- Air "leads" the tongue. Keeping consistent air support, practice long tones with lightly articulated "interruptions" of one "tastebud" touching the reed tip.
- First notes: air should be active in the mouth before the tongue releases the reed to start the sound.
- Avoid "jawing" or "chewing"- this can lead to TMJ.

Reed Exercises

- Daily long tones on the reed alone (C-Bb-Ab) will create good tone and air support.
- Articulation on the reed alone: with consistent air, observe the cork end of the reed while tonguing. It should remain still. If you see movement, too much tongue is touching the reed and/or moving through the mouth.