

Correct Embouchure for the Flute

If you really want to get a nice, clear sound on the flute, then you will have to have a proper embouchure. There are several different factors or things, that will determine how nice of the tone the will be able to produce.

The use of abdominal breathing.

The direction of the air stream.

How much of the hole on the mouthpiece is covered by your lower lip.

We will cover each of these points in an effort to help you get the best tone possible on the flute.

The direction of the air stream is made by the stream of air directed towards the opposite edge of the mouthpiece hole. You need to understand that is the direction of the air the streaming from your mouth the controls pitch and volume. The way that you can do this is by a forward and backward movement in the corner of your lips along with the moving up and down of your lower jaw.



A student will have to experiment somewhat to find out what direction of the air is produced by different methods of placing the mouth on the mouthpiece. Once you figure out the proper direction for the air to flow from your lips across the mouthpiece you can produce the sound and tones that you want to with clarity. Since each person lips are of a different thickness, shape and size it will be different for each person. So, the only way that you could really determine what works for you is for you to practice and experiment with the way your embouchure works with the mouthpiece.

Note:

It is a common mistake to think of playing the flute in the same manner that you would blow across a soda bottle. A lot of teachers and music educators make this common mistake. The flute has been scientifically designed and incorporates engineering knowledge that has been accumulated for many years. The aperture hole off the mouthpiece is very different from that of a bottle. Take my word for it, it is much different.

Another thing that you have to consider is which direction the air stream is moving across the aperture hole. If the air is moving downward the lower the pitch on the flute will be and consequently, the louder the volume of sound will be also. On the other hand, the more the air travels outward across the hole the higher the pitch will be and the softer the volume.

The next factor to consider is how much of the mouthpiece plate is covered by the lower lip. As I

said before, each person's lips are different, so the exact amount of the plate to be covered by lip is different from one individual to the next. However, there is a good starting position in each person can use this as a basis for their embouchure.

This will be done and steps so that you can easily set your embouchure.

Step one: Place the inner edge of the embouchure hole at the lower edge of your lip in a line where your lip and chin meet.

Step two: Slowly roll your mouthpiece until the hole is level with your lips.

Step three: Begin blowing across the aperture hole while rolling the flute toward you and then away from you.

These three steps should be practiced in a mirror so that you can see where your mouth lines up with the aperture hole. If too much of the aperture hole is covered by your lower lip than you're going to get a very thin tone. Also, other things like volume dynamics, articulation and legato passages will be very tough to perform. If too little of the aperture hole is covered by your mouthpiece, that you will really be blowing a lot of air to get any kind of sound and in effect, you will be wasting your air. Also, the same problems with dynamics, articulation and without passages will be hard to perform.

If you have learned, practiced and experimented and now have a proper concept of embouchure, then this next part should be easy. Abdominal breathing is very important to all with instruments, yet band directors seem to always have a problem teaching their students to sit up straight and to breathe from the diaphragm. A lot of my students who are beginning flutists, always seem to get dizzy because they are blowing like crazy to get a sound. The reason that they are wasting so much air is because their embouchure is incorrect. So, it is important to be able to breathe properly from the diaphragm, setting up straight so that you have a clear column of air and opening your throat to allow a free passage for the air to flow through. **However, this will all be in vain if you did not follow the proper steps for setting your embouchure!**

If you are having a problem with dizziness, then you are probably blowing with too large of a hole through your lips and therefore, you're wasting all kinds of air. Go back to the three steps we discussed earlier and practice in a mirror until you feel comfortable with blowing across the hole. It may take two a week or two practicing with just your mouthpiece to get the right embouchure, but if you practiced the basics consistently, it will be much easier for you to learn how to play the flute.