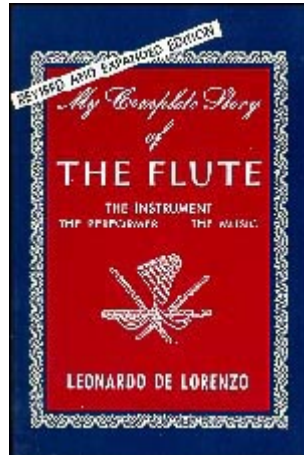




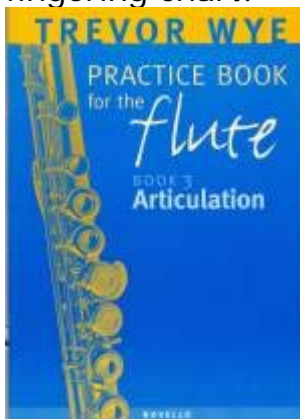
## Making the Grade: Flute Study Materials



While there is no substitute for plain 'ole practice, there are several accompaniments and study supplements that can greatly improve your flute playing. These books generally have exercises to accompany their lessons, which gives you great practice at developing the basics like tone, articulation, and fingerings. This lesson will tell you what good study materials are available, where to find them, and how to use them.

### The Essentials

When you purchase supplemental materials, the first thing you should buy is a fingering chart. Many books include a fingering chart on the inside covers or as a pull-out, so you may be able to get a two-for-one deal. However you choose to get one, though, make sure you have a fingering chart!



The next thing to look for is a beginning instructional book. I like the Trevor Wye's Practice Book for the Flute series. It is a six-part series, with each book focusing on a different skill essential for good flute playing. After a short explanation of the technique used, there are several exercises to keep you interested and practicing. The books are

short but helpful and are a great accompaniment to any player's library.

The Rubank Elementary/Intermediate/Advanced Method series is another good instructional method. The books walk you through flute playing, with little instructional text but many beneficial scales, practice runs, and even excerpts from full musical pieces. Each book begins easy and ends difficult, pushing the player to develop as they practice. This series includes a fingering chart and walks you through everything from fingering a B natural to perfecting grace notes.

One of the best instructional tools for the experienced musician is a recording of a famous musician! Visit your local music store to get instrumental recordings for very little money. When beginning to practice a new piece, it is a great idea to listen to how the best musicians have interpreted the music before developing your own style. Listen to their tempo changes, volume levels, and breath support. Strive to recreate the perfect tone on the lowest notes and listen several times to passages you are having trouble with.



### **Where to Find Them**

Both of these series cost under \$7.00 a book, making them an affordable, easy way to perfect the basics or revisit old techniques. They are essential to any player's library, and every player should warm up with 5-10 minutes of beginning exercises to loosen the fingers and improve skills. Without a good foundation, even "The Flight of the Bumblebee" will leave your audience unimpressed.

Instructional books and other flute accessories can easily be found on the internet. I think it is the quickest means with the greatest variety available. Try websites like [flutespot.net](http://flutespot.net) and [sheetmusicplus.com](http://sheetmusicplus.com) to find a huge variety of instructional books, sheet music ranging from classical Mozart to the Harry Potter theme song, and flute accessories,

including cases, replacement corks, and flute stands.

You can also visit your local music store to find these items. All reputable music stores will carry several different instructional books for every instrument imaginable, and the knowledgeable sales staff should be able to help you pick the book best suited to your needs. They usually won't have the selection available online, but you will have the book immediately and will save money on shipping. These stores usually have the accessories you need as well, carrying cases, flute stands, and technicians able to replace broken corks, pads, or loose screws.

### How to Use Your Books

If you have a private music instructor, ask him/her for advice on where to start once you purchase a practice book. Start at the beginning of a section and read the lesson carefully, making sure to understand what technique the following exercises improve. Then, pick two to five exercises a week to practice and perfect. Each day, focus on something new, trying to improve not only your articulation, but remembering to work on tone and posture. When you feel you have mastered a section, move on, but be sure to practice the exercises several times over before advancing.

If your study materials include a CD, listen where appropriate and imitate the good examples-listen for good tone on ending notes and clean articulation. Then when you practice, compare your technique to that of the professional and make adjustments where necessary. Before long, you will be the one doing demonstrations!

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