

Navigating the Flute:

Charting the Course for Young Musicians



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Topics Covered

- Physical Setup (Instrument)
- Physical Setup (Flute to body)
- Early Stages of Tone Development
- Flexibility
- Vibrato
- Articulation and Double Tonguing
- Technique



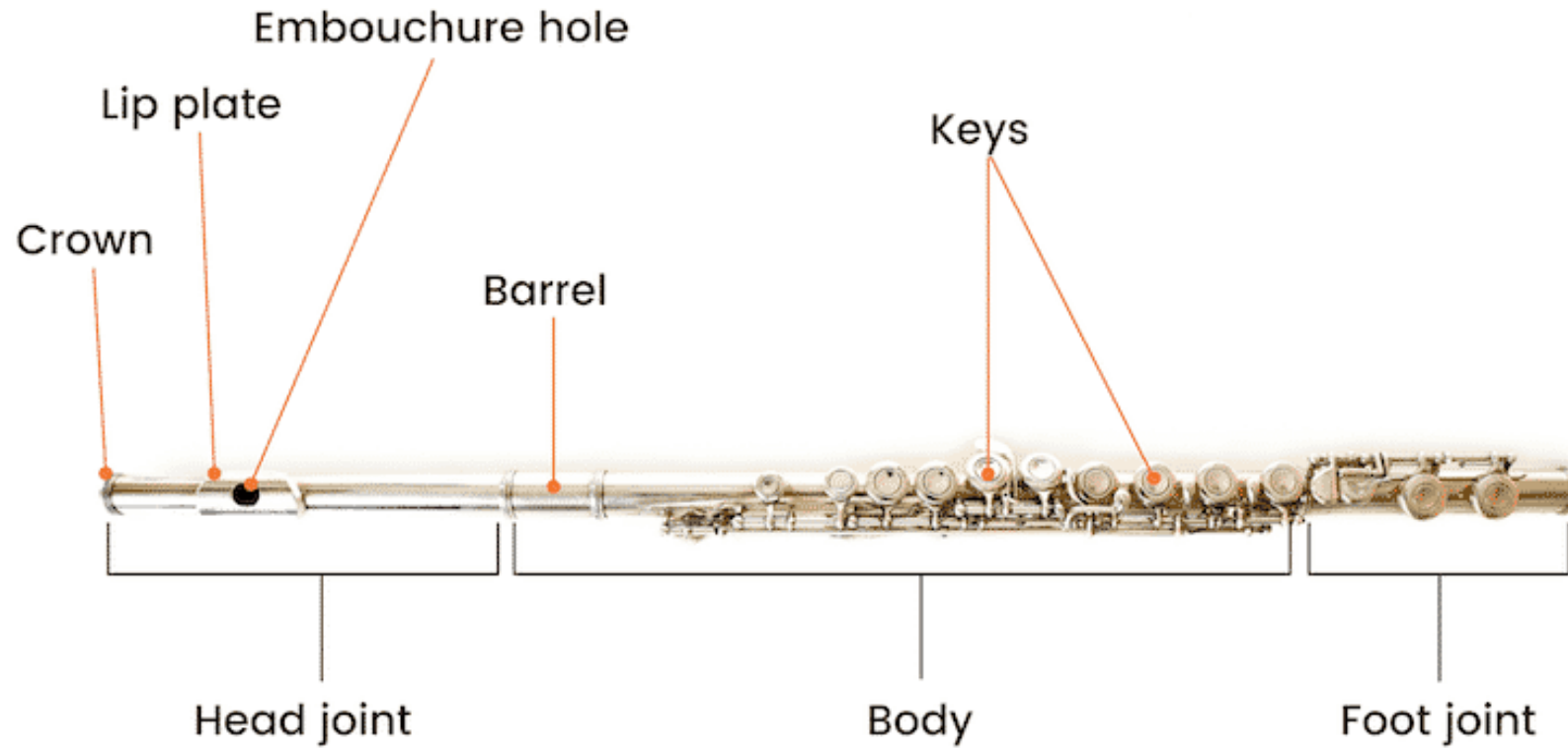
Physical Setup (Instrument)



Putting the Flute Together

- Grab the foot joint by the bottom and carefully connect to the body. The pieces should fit together easily. If this is not the case, the joints may need to be cleaned with a cleaning cloth to remove buildup.
- Never touch the keys or the rods while putting together!
- Hold the flute by the barrel and gently put the headjoint inside the barrel. The pieces should fit together easily. If this is not the case, the joints may need to be cleaned with a cleaning cloth to remove buildup.
- Make this fun!
- Teach proper care, maintenance, and cleaning right away!

Parts of the Flute



Hand Position – Right Hand

Hands and fingers should always be curved and relaxed.

- Right wrist – STRAIGHT
- Finger pads – in the CENTER of the key



Hand Position – Right Thumb

- The right thumb should be under the index finger.
- Place the thumb towards the back side of the flute.



Hand Position – Left Hand

Teach this step by step to ensure proper hand position.

1. Place the flute between the groove of the first and second knuckle on the index finger. (In between the first and second keys)
2. Bend the left wrist under the flute.
3. Curve the fingers over the keys.



Hand Position:

Three main points of contact

to distribute the weight of the flute evenly

1. Chin
 2. Right Thumb
 3. Left Index Finger
- *elbows relaxed at your side! No chicken wings 😊*



Playing Position – “The Planes”

1. Vertical plane in reference to the face – not too high
2. Horizontal plane in reference to the nose – not too low or high
3. 360° plane in reference from the flute to the face – not too close to body

Playing Position – Hip vs. Flute

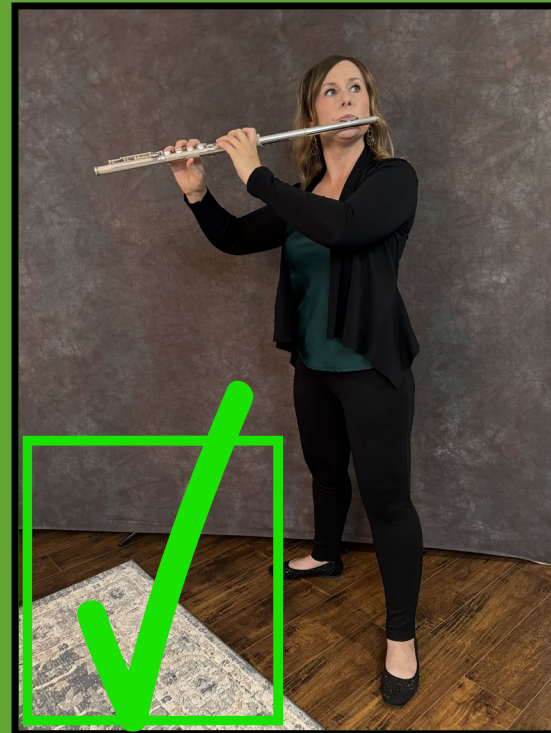
1. Left foot forward and Right foot backward
2. Hips should be at a 45-degree angle
3. Flute is pushed outward in the opposite direction from the hips

Flutes should be set in FRONT of the person beside the student when sitting in an ensemble!

Sitting

vs.

Standing





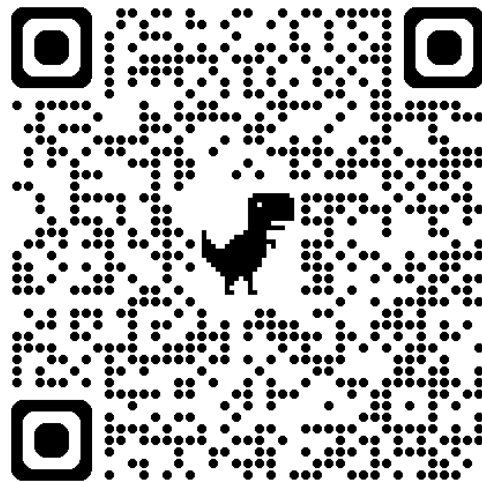
Plugs or No Plugs?

- Depends on size of student's hands
- Have a goal to remove all by the end of the first year
- Hardest to remove will be the left hand, third finger



- A great tool when used **correctly**.
- the different colors represent the different angles of air required for different registers AND different dynamics
- The black flat surface should be parallel to the ground (Use the penny trick!)
- Position of Pneumo Pro should be under the bottom lip
- Scan for more details

Pneumo Pro



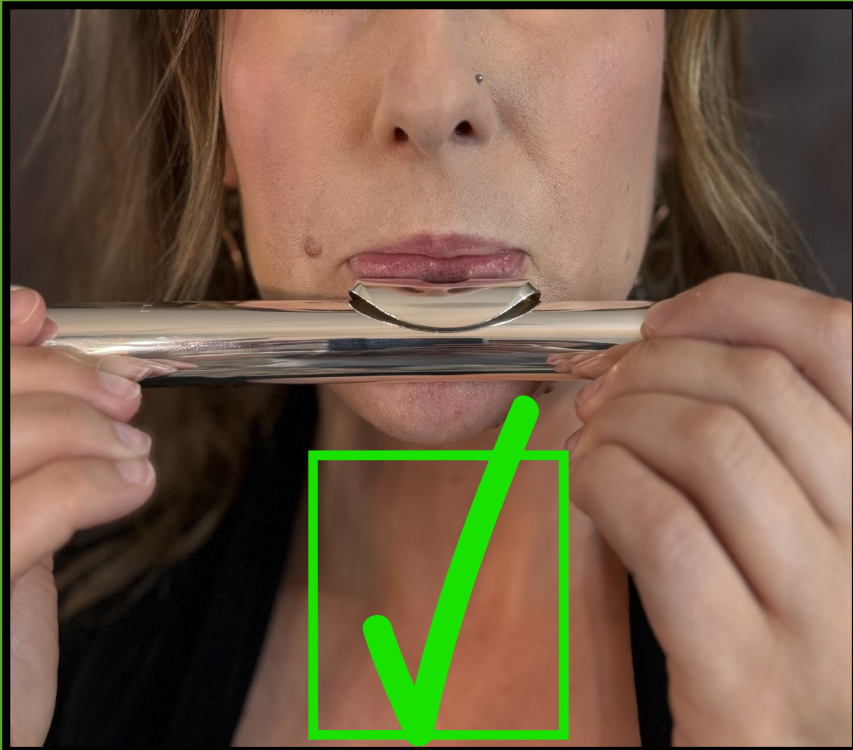
Headjoint on the face

1. Inside edge of the tone hole should sit slightly below the lip line.
2. Align the tone hole centered under the aperture.
3. Always check your students at *multiple* angles.

It is common for a student to have their headjoint too high on the face. Watch out for this!

Make sure the headjoint fits all the way into the chin!

No space between the bottom of the headjoint and the chin!



Headjoint Alignment

when putting together the flute

- The edge of the tone hole should align with the outside edge of the first key. (roughly depending on size of lips, etc.)
- The headjoint should be pulled out from the body to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch.



Flute Flexibility



What being flexible means...

- The student is flexible on the flute when they can change their air direction smoothly and easily.
- Wider intervals are no longer an issue
- The student is able to adjust pitch on a single note more easily



Embouchure



1. The flute embouchure should feel relaxed!
2. Corners slightly down in a frowning position
3. Bottom lip– pouted out over the tone hole, covering about a third.
4. I look for the inside part of the bottom lip!
5. Everything should feel like its pushing forward towards the headjoint.

Common issues with embouchure

1. Corners are pulled back in a smiling position.
2. Top lip is too far over the bottom lip. (Check side angle!)
3. Aperture is too big.



Tension on the sides
of the mouth.

Corners are pulled
back.





Air Direction

- Most of the time, should be at a downwards angle.
- The slope of the angle is determined by the register and the volume of each pitch.
- The student changes the angle by redirecting the air with the bottom lip. (Check side angle!)
- This is where the Pneumo Pro comes in handy!



Applying Flexibility with first pitches



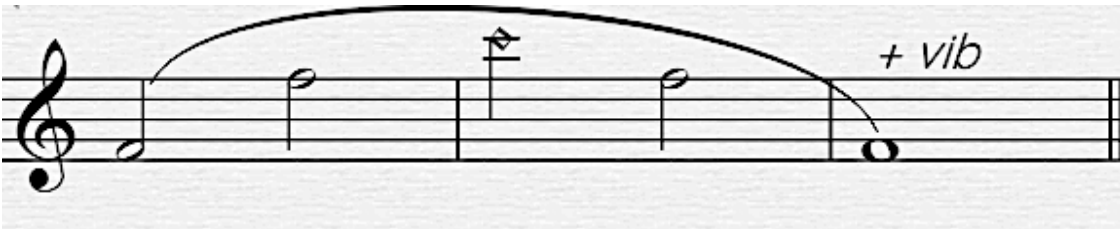
1. Start on headjoint every day
 - a. Covered (easier)
 - b. Uncovered (challenge mode)
2. First octave slur on F
3. Eventually add harmonics to the daily routine

Flexibility Exercises

1.



2.



1. Basic Octave Slur – start on F and work your way up to C. You can do this as a basic scale, then add notes with accidentals as you learn the chromatic scale. They should be able to do this once they accomplish an “octave slur” on **covered** headjoint.

2. Basic Harmonic Slur – start on F and work your way up to C. You can do this as a basic scale, then add notes with accidentals as you learn the chromatic scale. They should be able to do this once they accomplish an “octave slur” on **uncovered** headjoint.



More Complex Flexibility Exercises

3. 

5. 

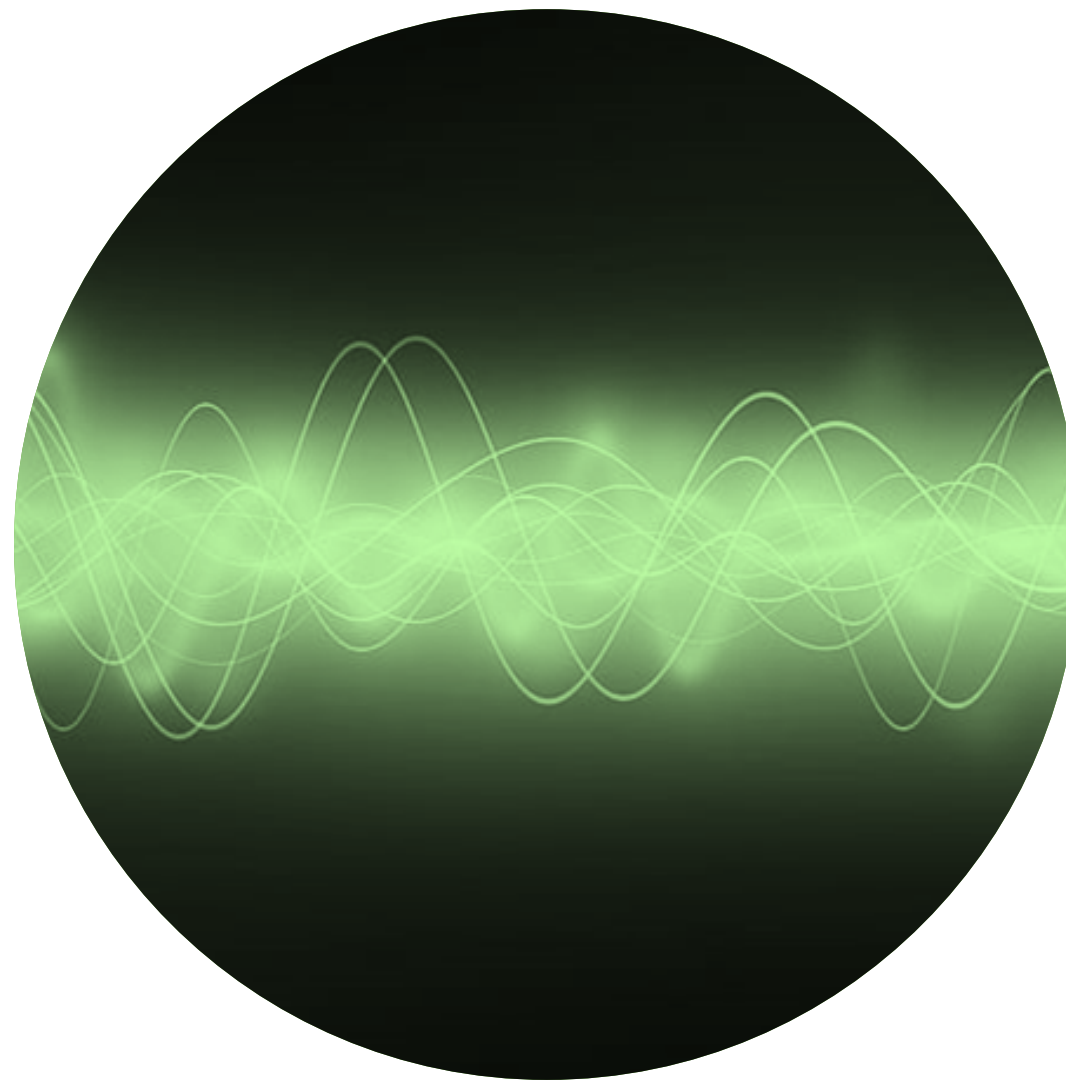
The diamond note represents the harmonic (do not change fingering) while the *starred note indicates that the “real” fingering is required.

4. 

6. 



Vibrato



How to accomplish the “pulse”

1. Remind your students to always think about the forward direction of the wave.
2. Start with notes separated “hoo hoo”
3. Slowly connect the notes with the air
4. Practice at different speeds and widths. Try different rhythmic patterns!
5. Apply to simple tunes.

Vibrato: Step by Step

1. "hoo hoo hoo"

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of three groups of four quarter notes each, with a dotted line underneath each group. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, and C5. The groups are separated by two rests.

2. "hoo hoo hoo"

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of three groups of triplets of eighth notes each, with a '3' above each group and a dotted line underneath. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, and C5. The groups are separated by two rests.

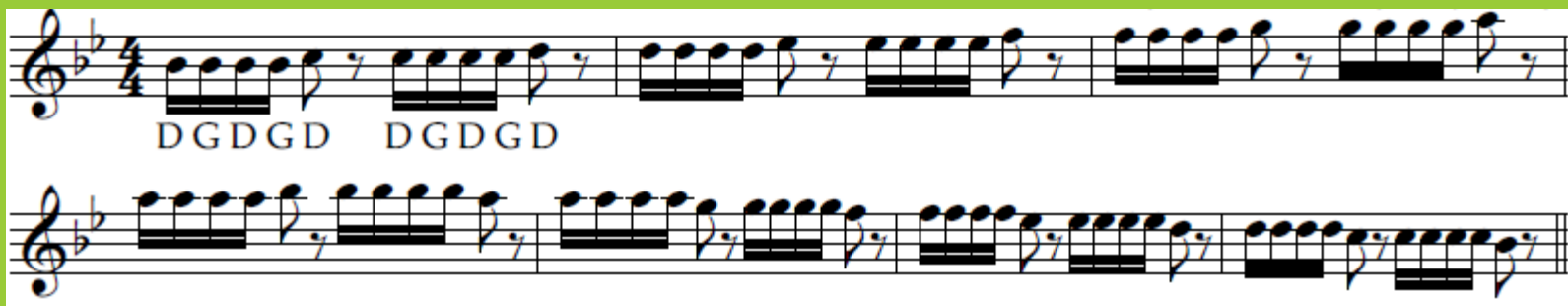
3.

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of three groups of triplets of eighth notes each, with a '3' above each group and a dotted line underneath. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, and C5. The groups are separated by two rests. The final two groups are connected by a slur, and the notes are vibratoed.

1. Start with notes separated. Use "hoo" - NO TONGUE
2. Try the same thing using triplets
3. Eventually connect the notes together with the air. The pulses should be wide and obnoxious.

Articulation and Double Tonguing

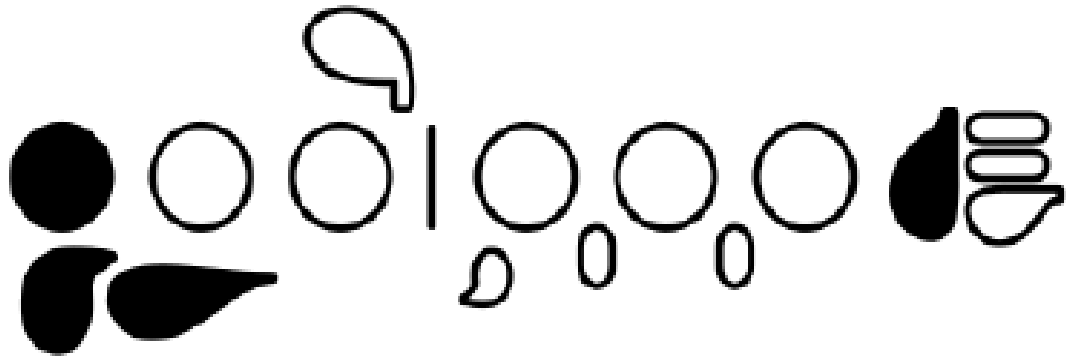
1. Practice saying double tongue syllables
2. Start off on a single note and slowly incorporate the fingers into the exercise.
3. Eventually, practice double tonguing on scale patterns.



Technique



The Three Bb Fingerings *and when to use them!*



Th - Thumb - this fingering is used when you have a A#/Bb present and no B naturals. It is also used to make technique easier!



The Three Bb Fingerings *and when to use them!*



L - This fingering for A#/Bb is used when you have a B natural nearby. You should use this fingering over 1+1 when you do not have to use the first finger on the right hand on the note directly before or after the A#/Bb.



The Three Bb Fingerings *and when to use them!*



1+1 - This fingering for A#/Bb is used when you have a B natural nearby and the note directly before or after the A#/Bb uses the first finger on the right hand.



Technique: Scale Bites

1



2



F Scale - Tetrachords 1 and 2



Technique: Chromatic Scale - UP

The image displays three staves of musical notation for a chromatic scale exercise in 3/4 time, starting on B4. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Staff A: Shows the first two measures. The first measure contains notes Bb, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. The second measure contains notes A, Bb, B, C, D, E, F, G. Red arrows labeled "Lever" point down to the Bb and B notes in the first measure, and up to the B and Bb notes in the second measure.

Staff B: Shows the next two measures. The third measure contains notes G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. The fourth measure contains notes G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. Red arrows labeled "Lever" point down to the G and F notes in the third measure, and up to the G and F notes in the fourth measure.

Staff C: Shows the final two measures. The fifth measure contains notes F, E, D, C, B, A, G, F. The sixth measure contains notes F, E, D, C, B, A, G, F. Red arrows labeled "Lever" point down to the F and E notes in the fifth measure, and up to the F and E notes in the sixth measure.

Technique: Chromatic Scale - DOWN

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a chromatic scale in a different major key. Each staff begins with a boxed letter indicating the key: D, E, and F. The scales are written in treble clef and consist of eight notes each, descending from the tonic. The notes are connected by stems, and the intervals between them are half-steps. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps and flats) and fingerings (indicated by numbers 1-5) to guide the performer. Red arrows point to specific notes, likely indicating fingerings or accents. The scales are: D major (D, C#, B, A, G, F, E, D), E major (E, D#, C#, B, A, G, F, E), and F major (F, E, D, C, B, A, G, F). The notation is presented on a white background within a green-bordered frame.

Technique: Two Octave Scales



Flute Resources



[Flexibility Exercises](#)

[Vibrato Exercise](#)

[Vibrato Tunes](#)

[Ultimate Double Tongue Exercise](#)

[The Three Bb Fingerings](#)

[Flute Tetrachords #1](#)

[Flute Tetrachords #2](#)

[Chromatic Scale](#)

[Advanced Scales](#)



Thank you!!

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