

Tips for flute players
By Tambre Thompson

To get a good sound on the flute, you need to check for a number of things:

1. Make sure you are blowing exactly where the tone hole is.
2. Look in the mirror to see the shape of your embouchure and check that the air coming out of your mouth is blowing into the tone hole.
3. Look for a small triangle of air on the other side of the tone hole.
4. Sit or stand up straight. Think of your back making a straight line.
5. Keep your head up. Imagine balancing a book on top of your head.
6. Your shoulders should be back and down.
7. Arms should be away from the body.
8. Push the air through the flute at a good speed- like you are blowing on hot soup.
9. Angle your air stream down into the flute.
10. Put the air under pressure.
11. Always start each note with a “too”- touch tip of tongue to roof of mouth behind teeth.
12. Support the air with your stomach muscles. Cough. Use *those* muscles to push the air through the flute.

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13. Keep your throat open and relaxed. Imagine you are yawning- keep that open feeling in the back of your throat. (Don't fall asleep while doing this!)
14. Good hand position means keeping your fingers near the keys but not resting on them.
15. Make sure your left index finger is wrapped around the flute and your right thumb is not protruding forward.
16. Do not hold the flute too tightly- it should be balanced and stable, but don't force the flute into your face or put too much pressure on the keys.
17. Use a fingering chart to check your fingerings frequently. I find the most common mistakes could be fixed easily if more students took this advice. There is a fingering chart in every beginning flute book.
18. Practice long tones and scales. These are the quickest and most effective way to get better. There is a reason flutists all around the world all do these warm ups.
19. Have fun! Play some songs just because you like them.
20. Make sure you practice new material, but save some time to review already learned songs. This is a very important part of making music.
21. Listen to your tone and play your favorites as beautifully as you can.
22. Enjoy playing your flute.
23. Listen to good flute players. Start building your flute music library.
24. Classical music improves your IQ- try listening to classical music while studying or doing homework.

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25. Open your flute case and play the flute everyday. Even if you only have a few minutes, try to develop the habit of spending time with your flute everyday.
26. Quality vs. Quantity: make sure you are playing correct notes, correct fingerings, with good posture, and good sound at all times.
27. Fifteen minutes of concentrated good quality playing is far better than hours of unfocused, sloppy playing.
28. Always practice in a quiet place where you are not distracted by siblings, TV, etc.
29. Always clean your flute and put it back in its case after you are done practicing.

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