

Care & Maintenance of Your Flute

Woodwind & Brass Ltd.
www.woodwindandbrass.co.uk



SOME “DOS” AND “DON’TS” OF FLUTE CARE

Your instrument is a valuable item, well worth your respect, care and attention. Regular maintenance is important – a little time and effort will help avoid problems, which may result in a costly repair bill. However, beware of attempting any repair, however small, yourself. If In doubt, please return to **Woodwind & Brass** who will give you the correct advice.

1. DO - Ensure that the flute is cleaned at the end of each playing session, using the cleaning rod supplied (or if you don't have one, you can buy them for as little as £3.98—see page 7) and a lint-free cloth of the correct size, taking care to wipe and dry the tenons (again, these can be purchased via our site). It is also a good idea to purchase a set of FLUTE PAD SAVERS which should be left in the flute after playing to help dry the pads, and also to stop them rotting.

To use a swab with rod: thread the cloth through the eye of the rod - you can wrap some around the top of the rod so that when cleaning the headjoint it can reach any moisture above the embouchure hole. Clean the headjoint first, then run the swab through the body again holding the flute by the neck where there are no keys. Run the swab through the footjoint in the same way.

2. DO - Wipe fingerprints and moisture off the outside of the flute with a SILVER CLOTH after each playing session. This should be done very carefully, in order to avoid damaging the mechanism and catching any of the springs. To clean the keys you should do this one by one gently wipe the cloth in a up and downward motion towards and away from the key cup arms. Please see arrow on diagram. Do not wipe the keys in a side to side motion because it puts stress on the key action.
3. DO - Always use a FLUTE STAND if the instrument is to be left out of the case, otherwise, ensure that it is put away correctly, after cleaning, at the end of each session.
4. DO - use a properly fitted case when transporting the instrument, and make sure that the case is closed properly before you pick it up.

Don'ts

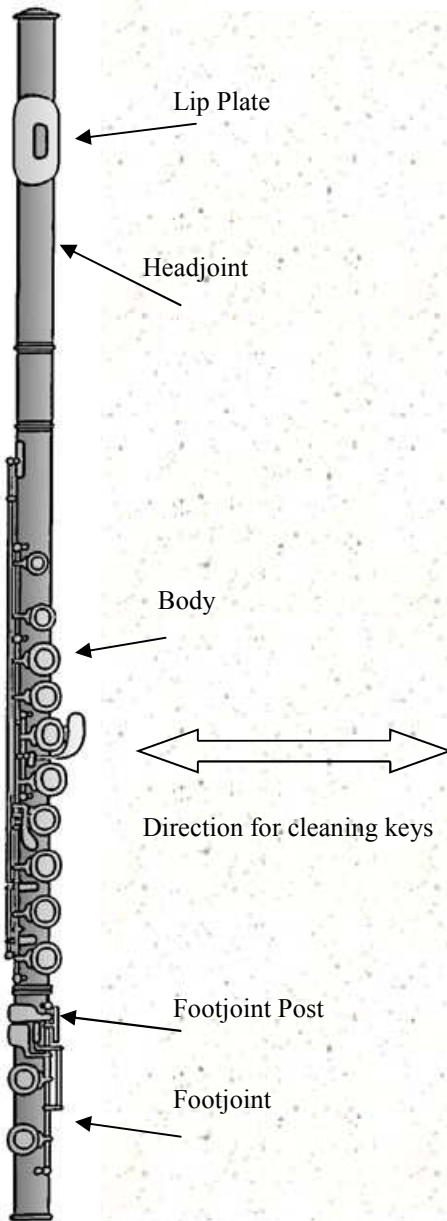
1. Never leave the instrument out of the case, in a place where it can be sat upon, or knocked – by people or animals! The number of times large repairs are required, as a result of such incidents, is quite surprising.
2. Never apply grease to the joints or sockets of the flute – it attracts dirt, which may become abrasive. Grease is used only on instruments with cork joints. Should the joints become very tight, clean the socket with a clean dry cotton cloth. If the problem persists, or, conversely, the joints become loose, please contact WOODWIND & BRASS.
3. Never use brushes to clean the inside of the instrument – they can damage the inside of the instrument. Use a silk or microfibre cloth with a flute rod. This is safe and effective.
4. Do not leave damp cloths inside the instrument case.
5. Never use liquid metal polish of any type.
6. Avoid straining any mechanism during any care and maintenance procedure.



NO



ASSEMBLING THE FLUTE



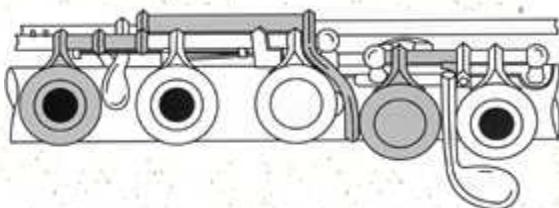
Remove the body of the flute from the case, hold by the neck, not the key area as these are easily bent. Hold the foot joint also where there are no keys, and line up the post on the footjoint with the middle of third finger key.

To connect the flute head joint to the body, gently twist the two parts together. The blowhole aligns with the first finger key, as shown.

For tuning reasons, sometimes the headjoint should not be pushed all the way in—the idea of this is to create flexibility with the tuning once the flute is warmed up.

Make sure that the flute is lined up properly before you start to play - it will play better if this is the case.

What is an 'E' mechanism? - The split E mechanism has been around for many years and is especially popular in UK. The note E3 has always been difficult to play in tune (it has a tendency to be sharp) as well as to crack easily when first played. The split E mechanism is an optional extra. When a player plays E3 on a flute without an E mechanism, both G keys remain open. However, if the player has an E mechanism, a bar located adjacent to the F# key pushes down the lower G key. The upper G key, however, remains open.



Why is the headjoint of the flute so important? - The headjoint is the most important part of the flute, not only for sound production, but also for tuning. Flute makers strive to make the “perfect” headjoint, however, it is unlikely that they will succeed, as this is a complicated and subjective issue.

Different headjoint characteristics exist: varying embouchure sizes, angles and depths, which alter the tone and the way the flute is played. A beginner will advance more quickly, and to a higher standard, with a responsive headjoint.

What makes a good student flute?

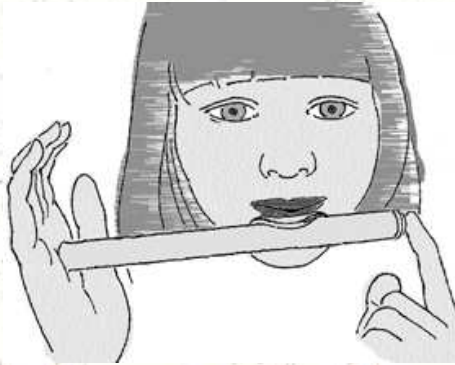
A good student flute manufacturer is one who considers the above: the importance of headjoint and padding. The flute should blow very easily and with minimal resistance; the headjoint should be responsive. Choosing a flute from a company who understands the importance of the above is vital for all students and parents who take music education seriously.

Why are the pads of the flute so important?

Padding a flute well is tantamount to making the flute play at its best. The lowliest flute, if padded to a high standard, will play better than a poorly padded professional flute. The pads work by quietly and completely closing off a tone hole, creating a hermetic seal. If the pad is not seated correctly within the key cup, it will cause an air leak, which will affect the production of that note, and every note below it – correct pad placement is of primary importance to tonal production.

Why is regulation of the flute so important?

The purpose of regulation is to ensure that two or more keys – which must close together – will seal the tone holes at exactly the same time. Some keys are not closed directly, but will depend on the closing of other keys to activate them, e.g. the F# is closed by the action of the D, E and F keys. It is also possible to make the mechanism feel heavier or lighter to the touch – this may be of no direct benefit to the student, but as they advance it can have much greater effect.



The Flute Embouchure & Hand Position

Flute embouchure should be very natural and the face should be relaxed. The bottom lip should rest gently on the lip plate. Breathe in fully in order to get sufficient air, with teeth apart. Relax the throat and the mouth should be an “O” (as if making an oooh sound). Air should be blown across the lip plate and slightly downwards. The air needs to go across the lip plate, into the flute and basically “hit” the back of the headjoint. Some air should be in the cheeks. Air direction or placement of air, is extremely important in producing the best sounds.

RIGHT - bend the arm at the elbow and raise - elbow should be pointed to the floor.

Fingers should form a kind of flattened “C” and the hand should be a natural extension of the wrist. Index and thumb of the right hand form the classic “ok” sign around the flute. The fingers of the right hand should be kept as close to the pad cups as possible and lifted only as high as necessary to open or close the key.

LEFT - the left index finger curls down onto the C key with the thumb pointing upward. The left wrist should be underneath the flute and slightly bent so that the flute

rests on the hand. The little finger should be just above or touching the G# key. As with the right hand, the fingers should be kept as close to the keys as possible, and only lifted high enough to enable the flute to be played without affecting pitch.

[Walstein Alto Flutes](#)

[C Flutes - Jupiter, Trevor J James](#)

[Pull Throughs - Hodge or Vandoren](#)

[Pad Savers - HW or Opticare](#)

[Cases - Aquae Sulis](#)

[Metronome - Seiko or Wittner](#)

[Music Stand - K&M](#)

[Flute Stand - K&M or Packastand](#)

[Tuner - Korg or Seiko](#)

[Flute Lyres](#)

[Leather Music Cases](#)

In fact there are a bewildering array of items you can get - but if you do need any of these items, click on them..... We've tried to make the site as user friendly as possible. Please phone us if you cannot find what you want. We're usually very helpful...

Tel: 01329 221970
sales@woodwindandbrass.co.uk

Or just click "CONTACT" at the top of the site pages.



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