

# THE BASICS

## Posture

Sit on the edge of your chair, and always keep your:

- Spine straight and tall
- Shoulders back and relaxed
- Feet flat on the floor

## Breathing & Airstream

Breathing is a natural thing we all do constantly. To discover the correct airstream to play your instrument:

- Place the palm of your hand near your mouth.
- Inhale deeply through the corners of your mouth, keeping your shoulders steady. Your waist should expand like a balloon.
- Slowly whisper “too” as you gradually exhale air into your palm.

The air you feel is the airstream. It produces sound through the instrument. Your tongue is like a faucet or valve that releases the airstream.

## Producing The Essential Tone

Your embouchure (*ahm'-bah-shure*) is your mouth's position on the mouthpiece of the instrument. A good embouchure takes time and effort, so carefully follow these steps for success:

### REED PLACEMENT

- Put the thin end of the reed in your mouth to moisten it thoroughly.
- Looking at the flat side of the mouthpiece, the ligature screws extend to your right. Slide the ligature up with your thumb.
- Place the flat side of the reed against the mouthpiece under the ligature.
- Lower the ligature and position the reed so that only a hairline of the mouthpiece can be seen above the reed.
- Gently tighten the ligature screws.

### EMBOUCHURE

- Moisten your lips and roll the lower lip over your bottom teeth.
- Center the mouthpiece on your lips and place it in your mouth about 2/3 inch.
- Place your upper teeth directly on the mouthpiece. The reed rests on the lower lip over the teeth.
- Close your mouth around the mouthpiece, like a rubber band. Your facial muscles all support and cushion your lips on the mouthpiece.
- Keep your chin down and slightly relaxed.

## Taking Care Of Your Instrument

Before putting your instrument back in its case after playing, do the following:

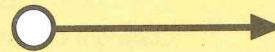
- Remove the reed, wipe off excess moisture and return it to the reed case.
- Remove the mouthpiece and wipe the inside with a clean cloth. Once a week, wash the mouthpiece with warm tap water. Dry thoroughly.
- Loosen the neck screw and remove the neck. Shake out excess moisture and dry the neck with a neck cleaner.
- Drop the weight of a chamois or cotton swab into the bell. Pull the swab through the body several times. Return the instrument to its case.
- Your case is designed to hold only specific objects. If you try to force anything else into the case, it may damage your instrument.

## MOUTHPIECE WORKOUT

Form your embouchure around the mouthpiece, and take a deep breath without raising your shoulders. Whisper “too” and gradually exhale your full airstream. Strive for an even tone.



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