REED ADJUSTING

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WHY?!?

A good reed makes *everything* better! Intonation, articulation, dynamics, tone quality … even technique!! So, really, **WHY NOT?!?**

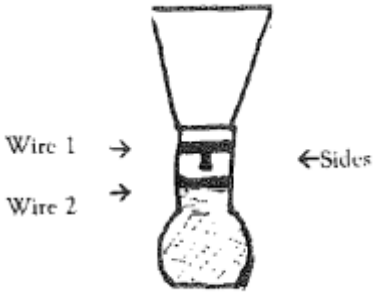
ASSESS THE REED

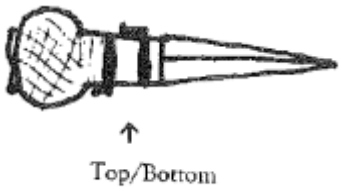
1.) Are your wires in the correct place? Have they slipped?
   - If your wires have moved, gently nudge them into the correct place with your fingers or pliers.

2.) Are your wires loose?
   - If your wires are loose, place your reed on a forming (long) mandrel, and tighten with pliers.

3.) Is the reed blade cracked? Even a little?
   - Sorry, discard the reed.

4.) Does the tip opening look as open/closed as you normally like it to look?
   - If not, place your reed on a forming (long) mandrel, and use pliers to adjust according to the following chart. A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY!!!

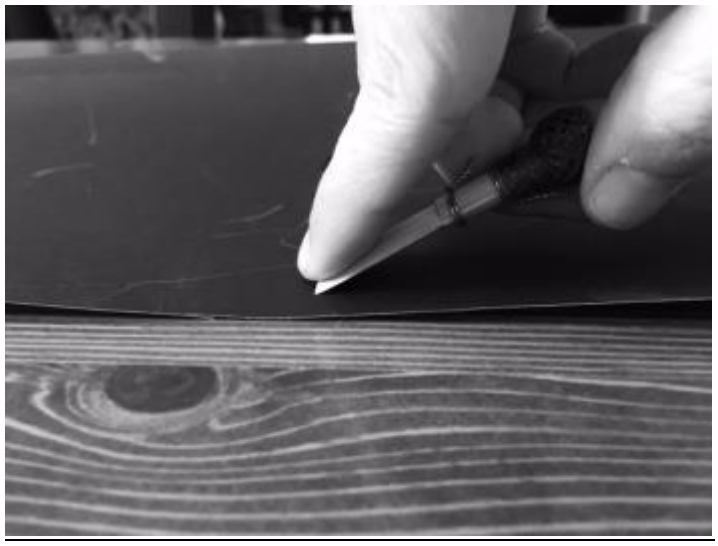




Wire Adjustment	Change to Tip
Squeeze Wire 1 from Sides	Open
Squeeze Wire 2 Top/Bottom	Open
Squeeze Wire 1 Top/Bottom	Close
Squeeze Wire 2 from Sides	Close

TEST FOR <u>RESPONSE</u>

1.) Play an F-Major scale 2 Octaves tongued legato ascending and staccato descending. Is it difficult to articulate, or do the articulations all sound staccatissimo?
    - Place 400 grit sandpaper on the table and <u>gently</u> drag your reed tip (both sides) across it to thin it. Repeat the test, then the thinning of the tip until response is adequate.

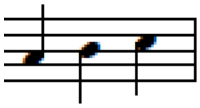


2.) Play repeated sixteenth notes on a low-C. Is response difficult? Or, is it difficult to articulate fairly quickly?
    - Place your reed on a holding (short) mandrel and insert a plaque between the blades. Color the shape below on the back of your reed with a pencil. Using 220 grit sandpaper or a knife, remove the pencil shading. Repeat the test, then the thinning of this area until response is adequate.

TEST FOR RESISTANCE

In a nutshell, resistance is how easily the reed accepts your air. A reed that is too easy to blow is just as annoying as a reed that takes an elephant's sneeze to get an open-F out!!

1.) Play "C-D-E" forte, tongued. Repeat the "E" a few times. Does your E break octaves?



- Tighten your first wire and retest
- Using nippers or a cutting block/razor blade, clip the tip *just a hair!* Retest.
- Place your reed on a holding (short) mandrel and insert a plaque between the blades. Color the shape below on the back of your reed with a pencil. Using 220 grit sandpaper or a knife, remove the pencil shading. Retest.

2.) Play a 2 Octave F Major Scale slurred ascending and tongued descending. Is the overall reed too "easy" to play? Too "difficult" to play?
    - Place your reed on a forming (long) mandrel, and use pliers to adjust according to the following chart. A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY!!!

Wire Adjustment	Change to Resistance
Squeeze Wire 1 from Sides	More
Squeeze Wire 2 Top/Bottom	Less
Squeeze Wire 1 Top/Bottom	Less
Squeeze Wire 2 from Sides	More

    - If your reed is still too "difficult" to play, try a Morning Wake-Up (listed in the next section!).

TEST FOR TONE

Following the adjustment steps above, you should now have a reed that feels good, but perhaps doesn't quite have the tone to which you aspire …

1.) Play a three-octave Bb-Major scale (2 octave is okay, too!). Go slow.
--Do any notes stick out?
--Are any ranges softer/louder than others?
--Is the reed sharp? Flat?
--Is the reed dull/stuffy/or sound like someone stuffed old socks in your bassoon?
--Is the reed buzzy/loud/or sound like someone put a saxophone in your bell?

- STUFFINESS: WHOLE RANGE
  Do a **Morning Wake-Up.**

  i. *Exfoliate*: Place your reed on a holding (short) mandrel and insert a plaque between the blades. Lightly run a knife over the reed blade – little to no pressure.
  ii. *Iron:* Still on the mandrel with the plaque, lightly run a different mandrel over the reed blade – little to no pressure.
  iii. *Clean Collar:* Still on the mandrel with the plaque, use a file or piece of sandpaper to clean the collar (that space where the blade meets the bark).
  iv. *Sand*: Still on the mandrel with the plaque, follow-up with 600-grit sandpaper all over the reed blade.

Retest, repeat.

- STUFFINESS: TENOR RANGE *(4th space G through its upper octave)*
  Place your reed on a holding (short) mandrel and insert a plaque between the blades. Color the shape below on your reed with a pencil. Using 220 grit sandpaper or a knife, remove the pencil shading. Retest and repeat if necessary.

- STUFFINESS: LOW RANGE
  Place your reed on a holding (short) mandrel and insert a plaque between the blades. Color the shape below on your reed with a pencil. Using 220 grit sandpaper or a knife, remove the pencil shading. Retest and repeat if necessary.

- BUZZINESS
  1. Repeat Resistance Tests and procedures