

Clarinet Basics

How can you become a better clarinet player?

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We will discuss Clarinet Basics today, including holding and hand position, tongue position and air shape while blowing, embouchure and articulation. You will find that by following these simple instructions, and by pursuing them when you practice at home, you will become the great clarinetist and musician that you want to be.

Please be ready to play your clarinet, try new things, and take lots of notes!

1. Holding and Hand Position

- a. Correct arm and wrist placement – arms relaxed and natural – wrists “in and under”

Personal Notes:

- b. Correct finger shape – NO “C” position. Upper hand at an angle, thumb and first finger in a “V”. Lower hand perpendicular, thumb and first finger in a “U”

Notes:

2. Breathing, Blowing and Tongue Shape

- a. Breath in (fill the bucket,) then shhhhh.....

Notes:

3. Embouchure

a. Support structure

- i. Build embouchure around the face, not the mouthpiece (structure of the face)
- ii. Hands press clarinet upward toward top teeth
- iii. Jaw (bone) moves slightly forward
- iv. Mouth open approximately one centimeter – not too far!

b. Muscles

- i. Bottom lip rolled in over bottom teeth. Line up front edge of bottom teeth with “color change”
- ii. CHIN MUSCLE DOWN – don’t forget the jaw (bone) forward
- iii. Corners in
- iv. Top lip “working” – pressing down on mouthpiece and tight against the teeth

Notes:

4. Articulation

a. Tongue relaxed – say “tee”, not “ta”

- i. Practice “in your mouth” - then on the reed
- ii. Move only the very tip of the tongue

Notes:

5. Questions??

