

# Flute Embouchure

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Vol 5, #2, p.39 (Nov-Dec. 1989)

[Complete article from BANDWORLD Magazine]

The flute embouchure can be one of the most difficult and elusive. The production of a beginning sound is often a major problem. The following technique almost always ensures a basic sound. After this is accomplished the student may re-orient the inner rim of the embouchure hole slightly but, in the beginning, the issue is to obtain a sound with the correct orientation of the lips to the flute.

The lower lip is relaxed, moist and pouty.

Soft mucous portion of the red part of the lip firmer portion of the red part of the lower lip.

Smell muscles—a term referring to the muscular action on the sides of the nose. The action simulates smelling something unpleasant—a coined term, the action helps to control the upper lip.

Have the student place the lips together firmly enough to cause the lower lip to form a crease \_\_\_\_\_ where the soft mucous portion separates from the firmer portion of the red part. The teacher should demonstrate and use a mirror with the student. With most individuals the crease in the red part appears approximately in the center of the lip. The location and use of this crease takes experience and practice. The rewards of this technique are well worth the effort.

1. Force a stream of air between the lips. Let the air create the opening between the lips. The crease should still be apparent.
2. Keep the lips moist.
3. Using the head joint, place the inner rim of the embouchure hole on the crease created in the center of the red part of the lower lip. Center the embouchure hole against the crease just below the created opening. It is usually necessary to roll the embouchure hole in and out until the air stream hits the opposite rim of the embouchure hole. Approximately 1/3 of the embouchure hole should be covered by the moist, pouty portion of the red part of the lower lip. Try to create the opening in the center of the lips. The opening, however, may not occur. If not, place the embouchure hole where it does occur. The issue is the basic sound. Adjustments may be made later. Do not try to place the inner rim where the red part of the lower lip meets the skin of the lower jaw.
4. The instructor should place the head joint on the student's lip at the beginning and have the student simply assist in the holding of the head joint with both hands. The teacher will instruct the student to concentrate on creating the small stream of air and a relaxed, moist and pouty lower lip.
5. Because of the difficult nature of the embouchure the following techniques are also helpful.
6. Have the student hold a finger very close to the lips to feel the air stream.

7. Use the edge of a sheet of paper. Pass the paper across the air stream both vertically and horizontally to find the "focus" of the air stream.
8. With the head joint in place on the student's lip. Instruct the student to close the lips and blow an intense stream of air forcing an aperture in the lips and bring the jaw forward and blow up the nose or think of blowing hair out of the eyes. maintain the air stream and slowly draw the jaw back until the intense air stream contacts the opposite side of the embouchure hole.

After the instructor has found the crease for placement and the proper angle of the embouchure hole in relation to the lips (a sound should result). Remember the student should create the opening in the lips with the intensity of the air stream. Have the student roll the embouchure hole against the lips then out to obtain a sound. This action helps to further consolidate the basic orientation of the lips to the embouchure hole. Instruct the student to direct the air stream across the embouchure hole, not into the hole.

The student should remove the flute from the lips then return the flute to the lips using a mirror to locate the correct placement, blow and produce sound. This procedure should be repeated several times to ensure the placement is understood and correct. During this entire procedure only the head joint is used. Now have the student cover the open end of the head joint with the palm of the right hand. A lower pitch will sound and this further conditions the student to the initial pitch that occurs when the entire flute is assembled. When the student exhibits a basic security with this entire process and produces a consistent sound add the the entire flute and use second space A as the starting note. The placement of the embouchure hole on the lip must not be caused to change by the addition of the complete body of the flute. Note especially the length of the arms with a very young student. The flute should be held at an angle approximately the width of the hand from being parallel to the floor.

This article appeared ten years ago in Bandworld Magazine as one in a 4-part series of articles on woodwind embouchures. (Vol. 5 #1 through Vol. 5 #4, 1989-90)

Source: 5•2•39