



How To Understand Reeds

Knowing your reeds is important to developing your skills as a player.

Tip 1: Reed Strength Guidelines

Choosing the proper reed strength varies from student to student depending on the mouthpiece, age, and physical build of the student. The following guidelines are suggestions that should be used as a starting point.

Player Level	Strength
Beginner (up to 3 months)	2 or 2.5
Advanced Beginner (3 to 12 months)	2.5 to 3
Intermediate to Advanced (12 months and beyond)	3, 3.5, and 4

Students will naturally need to move up in reed strength as they develop their embouchure muscles and breath support.

Tip 2: Preparing your reeds

1. Always wet your reeds before playing by placing reeds in your mouth for a few minutes.
2. Gently wipe off the excess moisture on the vamped or cut area, the bottom or table, and the heel.
3. Break in your new reeds slowly by playing them for short 15-minute intervals.
4. Rotating your reeds helps break them in slowly and keeps them in optimal playing condition.

Tip 3: Setting up your reeds

1. Place ligature on mouthpiece Loosen ligature screws and slide the ligature down the mouthpiece just beyond the opening on the bottom of the mouthpiece.
2. Place wet reed underneath ligature, sliding from top of mouthpiece to bottom.
3. Looking straight at mouthpiece, line up the tip of the reed with the tip of the mouthpiece.
4. Tighten ligature screws evenly.5. Be careful not to over-tighten the ligature screws.

Tip 4: Protecting your reed while playing

During extended rests or breaks, always cover your reed and mouthpiece with a mouthpiece cap. This keeps the reed from drying out too fast and helps prevent accidental chips and breaks.