



OBOE ARTICULATION

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Clean Articulations Rely on Consistent Air Support

- Low support: stick out the stomach while breathing in through the mouth. The throat should be relaxed "tubular" to efficiently pull air into the lungs. While playing, engage stomach muscles to flex inward and direct air through the oboe. Monitor shoulders and throat for tension- stretching can improve this.
- The 3 Ts: Tip of the Tongue on the Tip of the reed.
- Air must always lead the tongue. To maintain consistent support, practice a long tone, then add lightly articulated "interruptions" of one "tastebud" touching the reed tip.
 - Most articulation issues stem from a lack of air support leading to heavy/strong tongue movements.
 - After support is achieved, "thuddy" sounds indicate either: 1. contact with top of the tongue or too much tongue, 2. not touching the tip of the reed (tongue connects with the teeth or lower reed blade).
- Avoid "jawing" or "chewing" individual notes- this can lead to TMJ.

First Notes

- Air needs to be active in the mouth before releasing the tongue from the reed.
- Start with a small portion of the tip of the tongue on the corner of the reed, and increase the speed of air in the mouth to the level necessary to support the pitch, then release the tongue gently from the reed to start the note.
- If you release the tongue quickly, moving it far back into the mouth, you will create a strong, accented note, releasing slowly with small movement will provide legato articulation.

Reed Exercises

- Begin with a long tone, and with constant air support, add a slow, gentle (legato) articulation. Observe the cork end of the reed. It should remain still. If you see movement, too much tongue is touching the reed and/or moving through the mouth.
- Morse Code: in a long tone, bring "one tastebud" of the tongue as close to the tip of the reed as possible, until the tip "tickles" the reed. You will get a "morse code" effect as the tongue brushes the reed tip. Keep this level of closeness/relaxation when articulating.

Exercises in the Oboe

- Apply Reed Exercises to the oboe. If the additional resistance provided by the instrument causes heavy tongue movement, increase air support. You can also put a reed onto a piece of tube cane to build comfort with resistance gradually.
- On a low-resistance note (B or C) add a metronome to the first Reed Exercise. Start very slowly (QN=52ish) and make certain the tongue is staying close to the reed and only the tip is touching. Sound quality (legato) is more important than accuracy (being with the metronome). Slowly increase QN tempo as consistency and control improve. Over time, challenge yourself with subdivisions at faster tempos (sixteenth-notes at 100, for example).
- Mixed articulations: practice articulation patterns ("2 slurred, 2 tongued", "1 tongued, 2 slurred") in scales. The end of the last note under the slur must match the articulation quality of the next articulated note.