

Flute Hacks! A Cheat Sheet for Beginner Flute

TONE			
CATCH PHRASE	TROUBLESHOOTS	DISCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE
"MOVE AIR THROUGH THE FLUTE"	Tone production and quality of sound; high notes and low notes	Blowing barely any air or unfocused air	Bigger the breath, bigger the sound
" AIR AT A 45"	Unfocused and airy sound	Blowing directly INTO the flute or blowing straight across	Use the elbow as a visual for air direction
"EDGE OF THE LIP WITH EDGE OF THE TONE HOLE"	Inconsistent starts in wrong octaves; students consistently sharp;	Do not use the "KISS & ROLL" method. This results in wrong placement of lip plate on face	Use mirror to find sweet spot and proper alignment
"SPACE BETWEEN THE TEETH"	Muffled sound	Small mouth, touching teeth.	Drop the jaw and allow the mouth to serve as a resonator for tone to travel

POSTURE			
CATCH PHRASE	TROUBLESHOOTS	DISCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE
"HEAD, SHOULDER, KNEES AND TOES"	Poor alignment	Chair straight forward	Chair at 45 angle

HAND POSITION			
CATCH PHRASE	TROUBLESHOOTS	DISCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE
"THUMB UP" LH	Flute balance off and thumb using as support;	Thumb resting on the metal to the left of the thumb key	Thumb up to the ceiling available to move left and right.
"THUMB PLACEMENT" RH	Thumb parallel or too far forward or behind the flute; Flute rolls backwards when holding;	Thumb too far forward or to the side of the 1st trill key.	Coke can hands with thumb under the 4th finger or 1st trill key depending on size of hand.
"HAMBURGER HANDS"	Flat joints and slow fingers;	Touching the rods on the right hand and unbent fingers;	Curved, round "C" shape in the fingers including space between thumbs and first fingers;
"DON'T BREAK THE WRISTS"	Wrists visibly bent forwards or backwards, creating strain in wrist and forearm	Tension and pulling in forearm;	Natural shape in relaxed hands.
"HOVER" OR "TOUCH METAL"	Fingers visibly far from keys, more than 1cm	Flat Fingers and touching the key with more than the fingerprint	As close as possible, if not touching without pressing keys

VIBRATO			
CATCH PHRASE	TROUBLESHOOTS	DISCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE
"FLUTES VIBRATO!!"	Unsteady tone, weak air	Throat sounds, unsteady air.	Large muscles to small muscles, using the air to create waves;

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"CHIN UP!"	Covered and muffled sounds	Tucking in chin and rolling in flute	L shape space under the chin and sternum
"BORED IN THE HOUSE AND IN THE HOUSE BORED"	Thin tone and intonation issues	"Smiling" Corners	Relaxed "bored" face, as natural as possible for future flexibility
"CORNERS!"	Ability to move between octaves with ease	Overblowing for octave	Corners moving forward to canines, "ahh to ooh".

ARTICULATION			
CATCH PHRASE	TROUBLESHOOTS	DISCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE
"TOO VS. DOO"	No articulation; Throat sounds;	Resetting the lips Moving tongue between the teeth	Tongue should stay behind the teeth (where teeth and gum meet)
"WHOLE NOTE AIR"	No flow in sound;	Stopping air; breathing after each note	Think straight stream of air;

POSTURE			
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"END OF THE FLUTE IN FRONT OF NOSE"	Shoulder and back tension; poor alignment	Flute parallel	Push right shoulder a bit forward to relieve tension
"FLUTE UP"	Flute dips to floor, no space between elbow and ribs	Closed body position,	Natural extension of right arm;

HAND POSITION			
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"FLUTE BONE" OR "FLUTE CHAIR"	First finger not touching the flute leading to poor balance and technique.	No balance point	Touch point on right hand to touch point on the metal of the flute.
"IF YOU CAN SAY IT, YOU CAN PLAY IT"	Technique problems;		Say each letter and finger through the passage; at a speed in which both fingers and voice work together