

COMMON ADJUSTMENTS

FOR

BASSOON REEDS

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Wires:

Always try to solve problems by adjusting the wires first, because any adjustment made can be reversed if the desired effect is not achieved! Below is a trouble-shooting guide for better reeds with wire adjustments. Assume a well-soaked reed and a pair of pliers is handy. Wires should be tight after soaking, but not constricting the cane. After any adjustment the tip should be 1mm open at its center.

- Tip too closed:
Squeeze first wire on sides.
- Tip too open:
Squeeze first wire on top and bottom.
- Sharp pitch:
Squeeze second wire on top and bottom and/or first wire on sides.
- Flat pitch:
Squeeze second wire on sides and/or first wire on top and bottom.
- Poor response, stuffy sound:
Squeeze second wire on top and bottom, then first wire on top and bottom if tip too open.
- E in staff breaks, reed buzzy:
Squeeze second wire on sides, first wire on sides if tip too closed. Or move first wire towards collar.
- Need stronger high notes:
Squeeze second wire on sides, then first wire on sides if tip too closed.
- Stronger low notes:
Squeeze second wire on top and bottom, then first wire on top and bottom if tip too open.
- Better low note response:
Carefully slip first wire 1mm towards second.

Scraping Adjustments:

- Sharp pitch:
Remove cane from tip area starting at 1mm from tip to tip itself. Check crow. When crow is an E or F, stop and play on reed.
- Flat pitch:
Tip too long. Play on for five minutes. If pitch doesn't rise, clip tip with razor blade, 1mm at a time until pitch is high enough.
- Poor response, stuffy sound:
Remove cane from tip as in sharp pitch instructions. May also need to remove cane from area just in front of collar and heart.
- E in staff breaks, reed buzzy:
Play on for five minutes. If E is still unstable, clip tip 1mm. If reed is still bright, trim rails of reed starting at tip and going as far back towards collar as needed.
- Need stronger high notes:
Remove cane from the corners of the tip. Work as far back towards collar as needed, but avoid the back of the blade as scraping there will actually weaken high notes.
- Stronger low notes:
Remove cane from back half of the blade.
- Better low note response:
Remove cane from back half of the blade. Also scrape "oboe windows" in the back of the blade. These are two narrow areas to the left and right of the center spine of the blade, but not at the rail edge.