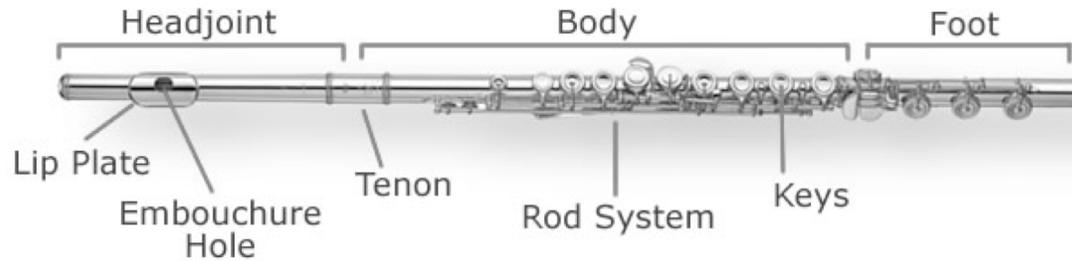


First Steps for the Beginning Flutist

by Jenna Daum



- The flute is comprised of three sections: the headjoint, the body, and the footjoint.
- Always start with the headjoint first! All of the sound production on the flute originates from the headjoint. Experiment with blowing into a straw across the embouchure hole to determine air angle and air speed.

Forming an embouchure

- Begin with the lips in a relaxed, natural position. Say “pooh” releasing the air through a small, relaxed, hole in the lips. Place the bottom of the embouchure hole underneath the bottom lip, covering the embouchure with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the bottom lip.
- Use a mirror to check lip placement! Embouchure should be centered with embouchure hole.
- With the headjoint in the correct position say “pooh” and blow air *across* the headjoint, not into the headjoint.
- Practice with the right hand covering the end of the headjoint and without the hand covering. Practice low notes and high notes. High notes are created by blowing twice as much air. Practice holding a note as long as you can!
- When this is easy, practice starting the note with “too” using the tip of the tongue.
- Have the student imagine a flashlight shining on the floor, then have them imagine a laser pointer. Describe to them that their air stream should be more like the laser beam than the flashlight.



Assembly

- When assembling the flute, hold each section by the ends (barrel: where the engraving is, and end of the footjoint where there are no keys). Do not grab the instrument on the keys and rods, as this can easily cause bent keys and rods.
- The center of the embouchure hole on the headjoint should be lined up with the first key of the body. The rod of the footjoint should be lined up with the CENTER of the last key on the body. Beginners very often align this incorrectly.

Four Points of Balance

- Left hand index finger against flute
- Chin against embouchure plate
- Right hand thumb against flute
- Right hand pinky on D# key

First Notes

- The flute is a C instrument, and the standard range is C1 to C4. With a “B footjoint”, the flute can play a ½ step lower to B.
- Choose a first note that balances the flute between both hands, such as D, Bb or F. Notes such as B natural and C create more difficult balance problems.

Disassembly

- Always clean the inside of the flute after each use. Take a soft cloth, such as a handkerchief, thread through the eye of the cleaning rod, wrap around the cleaning rod, and swab out the inside of each section of the flute.