

Bocal Majority

W O O D W I N D S

Bassoon Reed Care

How to make the most out of your reed:

- Do not handle the reed at the tip – only handle it from the string or the glue at the bottom. The tip is thin and could break or bend.
- Always soak your reed for about in a full cup of room-temperature water before you start to play. Soak bassoon reeds for 3 minutes (and soak oboe reeds for 1 minute).
- Do not oversoak the reed. Soaking for a longer time could make the reed feel harder to play.



Tips for protecting the reed:

- It's a good idea to keep your eyes on the reed as much as possible when in use. When the reed is not in your mouth, make sure that you are aware of where it is so that the tip does not get chipped or otherwise damaged. This will ensure that the reed lasts longer.
- A good reed case is a must. The plastic tubes/vials that the reeds come in are not suitable for storing reeds and will result in molding.
- Make sure reeds are flat and not angled in the reed case (the sides could get damaged). Wipe off the excess water at the end of your practice/lesson/class and blow the extra water out of the reed before storage to help avoid mold.
- Never store your reeds in the water soaker overnight.
- When it's time to put away your instrument, remove the reed first.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How long does each reed last?

A: Every reed is different. Reeds are made of an organic substance and they will eventually wear out naturally. A realistic expectation of a life span of a reed is about 4 weeks (depending on amount of time spent playing it). Damage to the reed also contributes to reeds wearing out or otherwise breaking. If the reed is physically damaged it will not last as long. A reed considered worn out or broken if it is cracked, chipped or molded.

Q: What if I don't like the reed I got?

A: You might get a reed and you might love it! 😊 Or you might not love it. 😞 Why? All reeds from Bocal Majority are handmade by professional musicians. Each of our reeds is made in a slightly different style. Each player may develop preferences or specific needs over time. If you get a reed that you don't prefer, consider a different style or ask us for advice on what you might like instead.

Q: What do I do if, when the reed arrives, it is chipped or broken?

A: Right away (within 24 hours of receipt) email us and send pictures of the problem. Email: jason@bocalmajority.com

Would you like to learn more about how to do common reed adjustments?

This is a link to a video by Sally Bohls and Jennifer Auerbach on basic oboe and bassoon reed adjusting:



Which Reed is Right for Me?

SOFT BASSOON REEDS	FIRST YEAR PLAYERS SOFT BUT PLAYS IN TUNE. RESPONSIVE, BUT NOT FLAT.
Soft Hot Glue Reeds	Strength: 2 out of 10. Has a hot glue coating.
Soft Thread Wrap Reeds	Strength: 2 out of 10. Has a thread wrap coating.
MEDIUM BASSOON REEDS	SECOND YEAR PLAYERS ABLE TO PLAY IN TUNE IN THE SECOND OCTAVE.
Medium Hot Glue Reeds	Strength: 4 out of 10. Has a hot glue coating.
Medium Thread Wrap Reeds	Strength: 4 out of 10. Has a thread wrap coating.
PRO BASSOON REEDS	ALL PROFESSIONALLY MADE BY HAND
Pro Herzberg	Strength: 6 out of 10. Most popular pro bassoon reed. Very slightly narrower shape.
Pro Christlieb	Strength: 7 out of 10. German shape. Easy to control the sound.
Pro Fox 3 Thread Wrap	Strength: 8 out of 10. Wider shape. Responsive but controlled sound.
Pro Fox 3 Heat Shrink Tubing	Strength: 10 out of 10. Wider shape. Very dark, controlled sound.

Bassoon Reed Common Problems and Solutions

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTIONS
The reed is hard to control. The player may sound buzzy or very flat, especially on 4 th line F and 3 rd space E.	Too much vibration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try tightening the first and/or the second wires. 2. Try squeezing from side to side on first and/or the second wires (check tip opening after). 3. Last resort is to clip the tip 1mm, which can be done with scissors.
The reed is hard to tongue. The reed may sound explosive (player blows, sound hesitates and then explodes).	Not enough vibration. Possibly tip too open or too thick.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try squeezing the first wire from top to bottom to close the tip, then test. 2. Try using sane paper at the tip (220 grit). 3. Try sanding the tip with sandpaper flat on a table.
The reed is hard to blow. The player may also sound sharp overall.	Not enough vibration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try squeezing from top to bottom on first and/or the second wires (check tip opening after). 2. Try using sandpaper in the heart and the back (220 grit).

First Wire Adjustments

Side to Side	Top to Bottom
Opens the tip	Closes the tip
Adds resistance	Makes more flexible
Makes sharper	Makes flatter
Strengthens	Weakens
Makes tone darker	Makes tone brighter

Second Wire Adjustments

Side to Side	Top to Bottom
Closes the tip	Opens the tip
Adds resistance	Makes more flexible
Makes sharper	Makes flatter
Strengthens	Weakens
Makes tone darker	Makes tone brighter