



**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 bassoon reed for about 3 minutes in a full cup of room-temperature water before you start to play (the entire reed).

Do not over soak the reed. Soaking for a longer time could make the reed feel harder to play.

After you're done playing, you must let the reed dry out, otherwise it could mold. Do not put the wet or damp reed back in the tube we sent it in! That will certainly cause it to mold.

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 help it last 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 the reed growing mold.

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 cup 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 the optimal 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 is considered worn out or broken if it is cracked, chipped or molded. Sometimes reeds last longer and sometimes reeds don't last as long. That is to be expected since they're made from an organic substance.

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. We have a quiz you can take to help you get the best fit reed for you!

Take the bassoon reed quiz to find your ideal match!



**Bassoon Reed Quiz**

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

**Damaged Reed Form**

A: Fill out this form within 24 hours of receiving the damaged reed.



Q: I got a reed and it's "bad," or "it doesn't work," or the teacher said there is something wrong with the reed and told me to contact you.

A: We're here to help you! We understand reed use can be confusing. While from time to time a reed that does not meet our standards may slip through our quality control, most commonly when you have a reed that is somehow not working for you, there is an adjustment that can turn a reed *zero* into a reed *hero*! Give us a chance to help you by filling out this form and explaining the problem as best you can. We're teachers, too and our goal is to help you have the best experience possible with your reeds.

**Reed Problem Form**



# Bocal Majority

## WOODWINDS

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

#### First Wire Adjustments

#### Second 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

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Closes the tip	Opens the tip
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Would you like to learn more about how to do common reed adjustments to get the most out of your reed? This is a link to a video by Sally Bohls and Jennifer Auerbach on basic oboe and bassoon reed adjusting:



## OLD NAME TO NEW NAME BASSOON REED COMPARISON CHART

OLD NAME	NEW NAME	PERCENTAGE
Soft Bassoon Reed Hot Glue	Bassoon Reed #1	50%/50%
Soft Bassoon Reed Thread Wrap	Bassoon Reed #2	53%/47%
Medium Bassoon Reed Hot Glue	Bassoon Reed #3	60%/40%
Medium Bassoon Reed Thread Wrap	Bassoon Reed #4	63%/37%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Herzberg"	Bassoon Reed #5	66%/34%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Garfield"	Bassoon Reed #6	67%/33%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Rieger 1A"	Bassoon Reed #7	68%/32%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Christlieb"	Bassoon Reed #8	69%/31%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Fox 3" Thread Wrap	Bassoon Reed #9	75%/25%
Pro Bassoon Reed "Fox 3" Heat Shrink Tube	Bassoon Reed #10	80%/20%

We changed what we're calling our reeds. Learn what changed and why:

Previously our reeds were classified as basic, intermediate, and pro. Those classifications do not give us the all of the information we need when choosing which reed we need and are a bit misleading. We are shifting your thought process, when picking a reed, over to how a reed vibrates. Reeds will now be classified by how much resistance vs freedom is scraped into them by the reed maker. Resistance is controlled vibration. Freedom is flexibility. The amount of resistance vs freedom varies depending on the reed. We describe this process in percentages. The amount of resistance in a reed will always be listed first. The amount of freedom will be listed second. The percentages will always equal 100%. For example, a young player will need a freer blowing reed. This reed needs enough resistance to hold steady but enough freedom to easily vibrate. Those percentages will be 50/50 or 55/45. As the player grows and their playing matures, the amount of resistance will increase and the amount of freedom will decrease. This change allows the reed to have more finesse/ nuance and control as well as a more mature tone quality. Those percentages might be 56/44-65/35. From here, the amount of resistance vs freedom can vary from 66/34-80/20. A player needs the kind of reed that makes them sound good and able to play successfully throughout the range of the instrument. We never want to play on a reed that feels hard to control whether that is too much resistance or too much freedom in the reed. A player needs exactly what they need. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Bassoon reeds will be classified as Reed #1 (50/50) - Reed #10 (80/20).