



Top Ten Reed Tips

1. Reed strength largely depends on the brand or professional reed maker. In general: Soak reeds in a container of water; not saliva. Saliva tends to make reeds less responsive while water may help to extend the life of the reed.
2. Alternate reeds to prolong life. Avoid playing on one reed until it dies. Have a minimum of two working reeds. A cracked reed is not acceptable.
3. Store reeds in cases available from oboe supply sources. If using the plastic tubes to store the reeds, poke a hole in the cap to allow the reed to dry out properly.
4. Leaking reed: Plumber's tape (pipe thread tape) can seal a leaking reed. Available for purchase at businesses like Loew's and Home Depot. Find another source of reeds if the reeds often leak.
5. If a reed is too open- gently squeeze the back (only when reed is wet!).
If the reed is too closed- soak the reed longer or in warm water to swell the opening.
6. Find a reliable source of professional reeds for students to order. Ask the professional to adjust the strength required by the player and the make of oboe played.
7. The same maker of reed (and/or oboe) will generally result in a better sound and blend in your oboe section.
8. Request that professional reeds be carried at your local music store.
9. Ask advanced students at nearby universities to supply your students with reeds.
10. No reed is perfect. Play the music and enjoy it.