

Warming up the Flute (Nov 2020)

Do not warm a flute by blowing into it – this will just cause condensation problems as well as initially distorting the tuning.

Either: hold the head-joint in one hand and the socket of the body in the other hand for 2 to 3 minutes before assembling the instrument

Or: hold the whole instrument over a radiator for 2 to 3 minutes once it has been assembled (this is only possible with metal flutes!)

Assembling the Flute

The most common cause of damage to a flute is careless assembly - so check that your method of assembly does not put undue strain on the mechanism.

Method 1 – for players with a strong grip

1. Wipe the head-joint and foot-joint tenons with a piece of silver cloth to remove any dust or grit (a small 50mm x 50mm square can be kept in the case under the head-joint for this purpose).

2. Grip the head-joint in your left hand and the socket on the Flute body with your right hand.



3. Gently work the body onto the head-joint with a twisting motion.



4. Once the head-joint is fully inserted rotate it (if necessary) so that the embouchure hole is aligned with the keys - then pull the head-joint out 2 mm (note some head-joints need to be pulled out further perhaps as much as 10 or 15 mm)



5. Now grip the socket of the body with your left hand.



6. Grip the very end of the foot-joint with your right hand to avoid touching the keys.



7. Gently twist the foot-joint onto the tenon on the Flute body *in a clockwise direction away from you* - when you take the instrument apart you must also twist the foot-joint off in a clockwise direction (please note on ALTO flutes the D# touch-piece on the foot-joint is longer than on Soprano flutes so to avoid snagging the D# touch-piece against the D key on the body of the instrument you may have to twist off the foot-joint *in an anti-clockwise direction towards you*).

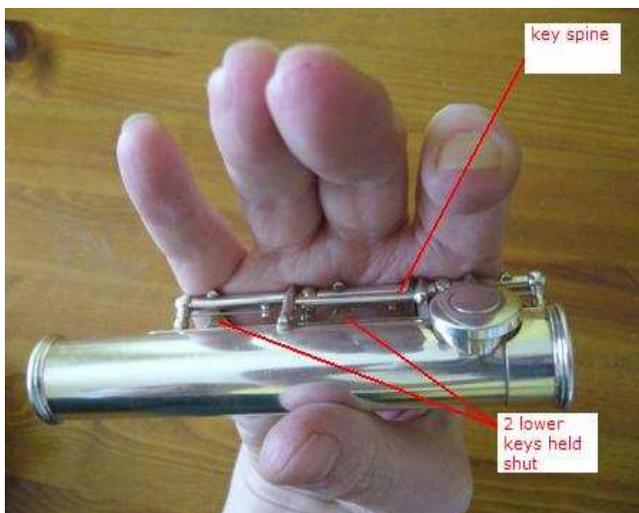


8. Align the foot-joint so that your little finger can operate the keys. You must always twist the foot-joint *in a clockwise direction away from you* so sometimes it may be necessary to twist the foot-joint 360 degrees until the little finger keys come back around and you can align them (please note on ALTO flutes the D# touch-piece on the foot-joint is longer than on Soprano flutes so you may have to twist the foot-joint *in an anti-clockwise direction towards you* to avoid snagging the D# touch-piece against the D key on the body of the instrument).

Method 2 – for players with a weaker grip (not for Alto flutes)

Steps 1 to 5 as above

6. Grip the foot-joint with the upper part of your palm pressing down on the spine of the keys and the middle of your palm gently holding closed the two lowest keys.



7. Gently twist the foot-joint onto the tenon on the Flute body *in a clockwise direction away from you* (when you take the instrument apart you must also twist the foot-joint off in a clockwise direction).



8. Align the foot-joint so that your little finger can operate the keys; if you need to re-align the foot-joint remember to twist it *in a clockwise direction away from you*.

Adjustment of the head-joint and foot-joint

Many Flute players assemble the instrument correctly but find when they start to play that they need to adjust the position of the head-joint slightly and whilst making this adjustment they forget to grip the body of the instrument at the socket and instead grip the keys (this eventually bends the mechanism so that the pads do not seat properly); likewise players may need to adjust the position of the foot-joint slightly and whilst making this adjustment they forget to twist the foot-joint in a clockwise direction away from them and instead twist it anti-clockwise back towards them (this puts excessive pressure on the front of the pads and they quickly start to deform and leak).

Dis-assembling the instrument

1. Leave the instrument on its stand to 'air' before packing it away if possible
2. Reverse the procedure for assembly but remember the foot-joint must still be twisted in a *clockwise direction away from you* (except on some ALTO flutes if the D# touch-piece would snag the D key on the body of the instrument – in which case twist the foot-joint in an anti-clockwise direction towards you).
3. 'Flick' the head-joint to remove any water droplets (or swab out using the tuning rod with a piece of paper towel inserted in the slit at the end)
4. Swab out each part of the instrument then leave the Flute to 'air' in its case with the top open for 5-10 minutes if possible, this will help prolong the life of the pads.

If the instrument has to be regularly packed away without being left to air then a 'pad saver' will help - it will soak up the moisture left in the instrument.

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