

NEW REED TIPS

TIPBOOK TIP: 20 **Playing Well Right Away**

Reeds that perform very well straight away may not last very long. The best reeds often feel a little hard on their first use. This can be overcome by slowly breaking in the reeds.

TIPBOOK TIP: 21 **Breaking In Reeds**

Many saxophonists first 'break in' their new reeds by only using them a few minutes per day for the first week. This helps reeds last longer and play more consistently.

TIPBOOK TIP: 22 **Use More Reeds**

If you use one reed all the time, it will gradually become weaker. By the time the reed needs to be replaced it will be so weak that any new reed you try will seem too hard. Always rotate between at least 2 to 3 reeds to ensure that you always have a good selection of reeds that feel comfortable.

TIPBOOK TIP 23: **Massage**

Some players advise that you massage new reeds, sliding your thumb over the vamp, down to the tip, which may be helpful if a reed feels too stiff. This process also allows the oils and deposits in your skin to seal the pores of the reed, giving the reed a natural barrier, which will help prevent breakdown.

TIPBOOK TIP 24: **Pith and Saliva**

A reed consists of countless hollow miniature tubes or fibers with a soft material (pith) between them. The pith gradually softens from exposure to your saliva when you play, until it becomes so soft that you have to reject it. Reeds typically last between two and six weeks.

TIPBOOK TIP 25: **Switching Reeds**

Reeds are said to last longer if you don't use the same one for too long. For that purpose, some players carry a supply of good reeds, allowing them to switch reeds every hour or even more frequently.

Tipbook Tips 28 and 32 come with Tipcodes. Go to www.tipbook.com, click on US, click on Tipcode, and enter the Tipcode! All Tipbooks come with these helpful Tipcodes.

TIPBOOK TIP 26: **Increasing A Reed's Lifetime**

Here's how you can help your reeds last longer:

- Rinse your reed in clean water after playing. Then dry it with a cotton cloth or handkerchief, or by passing it between your thumb and index finger, always towards the tip.
- Use a proper reed case or Rico Reedgard™.
- Lay each new reed on a flat surface and firmly rub it from the heart to the tip with the back of a teaspoon.
- Break your reeds in slowly, so that the dried material gradually gets used to being wet again.
- Using a mouthpiece cap during intermission protects your reed and keeps it moist.

TIPBOOK TIP 27: **Humidity Storage and ReedVitalizer™**

Storing your reeds at the proper humidity level helps them last longer and play more consistently. The proper humidity level prevents reeds from warping and cracking, the most common causes of reed problems. Storage kits like Rico Reed Vitalizer™, take the guess-work out of humidity balancing. Reeds also moisten faster when stored at the proper humidity.

REED PLACEMENT TIPS

TIPBOOK TIP 28: **Putting on a Reed (TIPCODE: RICO-001)**

Here's how you put a reed on your mouthpiece:



1. Slide the ligature over the mouthpiece until it's almost in its final position.
2. Place the wetted reed under the ligature...
3. ... and make sure the edges and the tip are exactly in line with the rails and tip of the mouthpiece.
4. Now slide the ligature into place and tighten it – not too much, otherwise the reed won't vibrate properly.

TIPBOOK TIP 29: **The Ligature**

Both the mouthpiece and the ligature are a bit wider on one end than on the other. Always make sure you put the ligature on the right way to avoid bending the ligature. Many mouthpieces have a guideline that shows you how far the ligature should be pushed down.

TIPBOOK TIP 30: **Too Light, Too Heavy?**

You may vary the position of the ligature to compensate for a reed that seems to play too lightly or too heavily. A reed will behave as if it were a little harder if you slide the ligature down a bit, and vice versa.

TIPBOOK TIP 31: **Positioning The Reed**

You can also try moving up the reed slightly (if it feels too soft) or down the mouthpiece (if it feels too hard). This should only be done in small increments.

TUNING TIPS

TIPBOOK TIP 32: **Tuning Your Sax (TIPCODE: RICO-002)**

You tune a sax by simply pushing the mouthpiece further onto the neck. This makes the entire instrument a bit shorter, and thus a little higher in pitch. Moving the mouthpiece back makes the instrument longer, lowering the pitch. It's simple: The longer the horn, the lower the pitch!

TIPBOOK TIP 33: **Playing By Yourself**

Tuning your horn is also important if you play by yourself. If your horn is tuned too high or too low, you may develop intonation problems, as the position of the toneholes won't match the total length of the horn anymore. If the mouthpiece is too far back, your low register will not sound clean.

TIPBOOK TIP 34: **Flat or Sharp?**

Do you find it difficult to hear whether your instrument sounds flat or sharp? Here's a trick: First push the mouthpiece as far onto the neck as it will go. Now the instrument will sound obviously sharp. Then pull it out as far as possible, making it sound flat. The correct tuning will be somewhere in the middle.

TIPBOOK TIP 35: **Transposing Tuners**

There are special tuners for transposing instruments. Shift it to the pitch of your instrument and it will display the note you're fingering, rather than the sounding note. For example, set the tune to Eb for Alto Saxophone.

TIPBOOK TIP 36: **Tuning Line**

Is your sax warmed up and well tuned? Draw a line on the neck cork or tuning cork, just where the mouthpiece ends. The next time you play, simply align the mouthpiece to the line. Using this as a starting point, your tuning can't be that far off!

TIPBOOK TIP 37: **Higher Temperature, Higher Pitch**

A sax will warm up with playing, so you may have to retune after a while: a higher temperature results in a higher pitch. If it's steaming hot or freezing cold, it may be hard to get the instrument to play in tune at all.

TIPBOOK TIP 38: **Vintage Horn, Vintage Mouthpiece**

If you play a vintage saxophone and you're having intonation problems, the mouthpiece may be the culprit: vintage saxophones often need a vintage mouthpiece.



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Reed Performance & Tuning