

Breaking in Reeds

Equipment: shot-glass of water, 4 to 5 new reeds, clarinet, reed-rush, timer, index cards, flat surface, pen, reed case

DAY 1

- remove reed from package and soak in water (both ends) for about a minute.
- play on reed for **2 minutes**: check high C (loud) and open G (soft).
- rub reed on index card, number reed, and mark that you worked on it.
- place reed in reed case and let it rest until the next day.

DAY 2

- soak reed in water for about 30 seconds.
- play reed for **4 or 5 minutes**: play low-high range. Don't go above a high D
- rub reed on index card, mark that you worked on it.
- place reed in reed case.

DAY 3

- wet reed in water.
- play reed for a minute or two. Check reed on right-left sides on an open G for evenness of tone; note which side is not as responsive. Check reed tip as well on the back of your thumb nail.
- use reed-rush to sand down the tough side and anywhere on the tip that is much stiffer than the rest of the tip. NOTE: only sand away very little bits at a time; you can always sand off more, but you can't put any back on ;) Don't try to totally balance reed on first day. Play reed for a total of **8 minutes**.
- rinse reed in water, rub on index card, mark, and put in case.

DAY 4

- wet reed in water.
- play reed for a minute or two. Check reed on right-left sides on an open G for evenness of tone. If reed is too soft, clip tip. If too hard, sand sides and tip.
- use reed-rush to sand down tough side(s) of reed. Make sure to work in small bits. Play reed for **12 minutes**.
- rinse reed in water, rub on index card, mark, and put in case.

DAY 5

- wet reed
- play reed for **15 minutes**. Make any last adjustments with reed rush needed.
- rub on index card, mark and put in case.

* If a reed continually "chirps," throw it away. No matter how much you work on it, it will never be a good reed.