

Suggestions for Playing Long tones

Play each measure twice. Once with vibrato and once without. Start with whichever produces your best tone and then listen to create the same quality in the repeat.

Long Tones

Try to hold for at least 10 seconds. More is okay but make sure the tone is strong - not too soft.

Start your breathing with an exhale!! Then open your mouth and take a relaxed, full breath.

Preferably take a taller breath rather than wider. Singers use the 2-3-finger rule in opening the mouth to breathe. Whatever feels comfortable; don't try to take a breath through the regular flute embouchure.

This will create tension and not allow for as deep a breath. Try not to pull corners back when breathing.

Work towards a smaller opening in the lips using as little air as possible to create a strong sound.

Keep the upper lip firm and down. Stay forward with your lips in order to keep lips supple and closed on the sides [no smiling!] Try not to pull the corners of your lips back.

Listen for vibrato – wide pitch change.

Listen for good clear tone - lots of “ring” or resonance

Support - when you start to run out of air - PUSH with the lower abdominal muscles!!! Try to stay expanded through the upper abdomen [solar plexus] and chest. This can significantly increase the note length.

Be sure to keep tongue flat and larynx down. [This produces the open throat idea. Just don't “open the throat” too much or you will create unwanted tension. Keeping the jaw relaxed and down [not back] will help pull the upper lip down and keep the throat relaxed.

For low notes, be sure not to turn the flute in and relax the air speed. Blow from the lower abdominal muscles.

For high notes, keep the larynx down, keep the upper lip pulled down and try to avoid bringing the jaw up. Raising the jaw will create instability. Forward is ok, but don't think “up”.

Vibrato quarter note = 60

Pulse quarter notes, then 8ths, then triplets, then 16ths then quintuplets and sextuplets.

Listen for pitch change and waves - not sharp lines. Begin from the abdominal muscles, not from the throat. As you speed up the vibrato will “climb” to the solar plexus and throat.

Start with left hand notes, as they are more flexible. Gradually work through the right hand notes. Avoid too wide [pitch change] of a vibrato in the low register, but make sure you have a lot of pitch change in the high register!