

Tuning Hints

1. Learn to listen to yourself.
2. Use a tuner when playing 12th, octaves, slow scales and other related exercises. The legato exercises on the back of my sheet are also excellent for this purpose.
3. Play notes with a piano to learn to match pitches. Use the tuner to check.
4. Learn how to adjust your instrument. Pulling the barrel out too much makes the throat tones unproportionately flatter than the rest of the clarinet. If you need to pull out the barrel too much try a longer barrel. Pull out the middle joint and bell to adjust the clarinet as well to your need. If you need to pull the middle joint out all the time have an insert made to fit.
5. Learn which notes tend to be sharp. Some notes can be lowered with putting tape in the upper part of the tone hole. If they are flat they might be improved by having the tone holes undercut, but be careful of the 12ths so you don't fix one note and make the 12th worse.
6. Covering holes usually makes notes flatter; opening keys usually makes notes higher. Learn your clarinet. Use your embouchure as well to adjust the pitch but do not distort the tone quality.
7. Learn finger combinations for your throat tones if necessary to play them in tune.
8. Know several fingerings for each high note so you have a choice in any given passage.
9. Always voice the pitch when using an alternate fingering that is not well in tune. Choose your fingerings carefully so you avoid playing a note out of tune if at all possible.
10. When purchasing a new clarinet make sure the 12ths are close to in tune as possible and that the throat tones are closely in tune as well. Look for tone quality, feel, and evenness throughout the instrument and good intonation.
11. Try different barrels and bells for pitch as well as tone and ease of playing. Some mouthpieces play a bit sharp or flat so a longer or shorter barrel can compensate.
12. A new register tube may be necessary if the upper register is out of tune, the throat Bb is flat or excessively sharp or you can't voice the "grunt" out of the upper 12ths.