

Here is an example. On my small D whistle, with the tuning slide closed (i.e. fully pushed in) the distance from the cutting edge (the labium lip) to the center of the B3 hole is about 8.5 inches. This is the length of the vibrating air column that produces low E, B3 being the lowest uncovered tone hole. The distance from the cutting edge to the center of the T1 hole is about 4.25 inches. This is the length of the vibrating air column that produces C-sharp in the low register, T1 being the lowest uncovered tone hole. If I pull out the tuning slide by one-quarter inch, I increase the lengths of these air columns to 8.75 inches and 4.5 inches respectively. In the case of E, this is a lengthening of about 2.9%, while for C-sharp this is a lengthening of about 5.9%. It follows that lengthening the whistle by one-quarter inch will lower the pitch of the C-sharp (the higher note) quite a bit more than it will lower the pitch of the E (the lower note). If you lengthen your whistle as far as it will safely go, you will experience this effect in the extreme.

If you have a one-piece whistle with a plastic mouthpiece that is glued onto a metal tube, you may be able to melt the glue so that the mouthpiece becomes movable. Try dipping the mouthpiece into very hot water to melt the glue, taking care not to melt the plastic. Then remove the mouthpiece and clean the molten glue out of it and off of the metal tube. When you put the mouthpiece back on, you will hopefully be able to adjust it in order to correct the overall pitch of the whistle.

TAKING A BREATH WHILE PLAYING

You will take frequent and quick breaths while playing the whistle. When you take a breath keep the whistle in place. Let the mouthpiece rest on your lower lip and open your mouth just a tiny bit so you can take air in quickly.

CLEARING THE WINDWAY

If the tone sounds stuffy or you can't produce any sound, there is probably a build-up of saliva or condensation in the windway of the whistle. This happens quite routinely, especially when you are salivating more than usual, such as soon after eating. It also happens more when the whistle is cold. There are two good ways to clear the windway.

One is to simply inhale *through* the whistle, keeping the whistle at your mouth as in normal playing and not opening your mouth. This way you will suck back in the moisture that is causing the problem. This is the method to use when you don't want to interrupt your playing. It is not a good way to get a fast, deep breath, however.

The other way is to stop playing, place a finger over the window of the mouthpiece, and blow forcefully enough through the whistle to clear out the clogging moisture. If you don't place your finger over the window you will produce quite a loud and shrill noise.

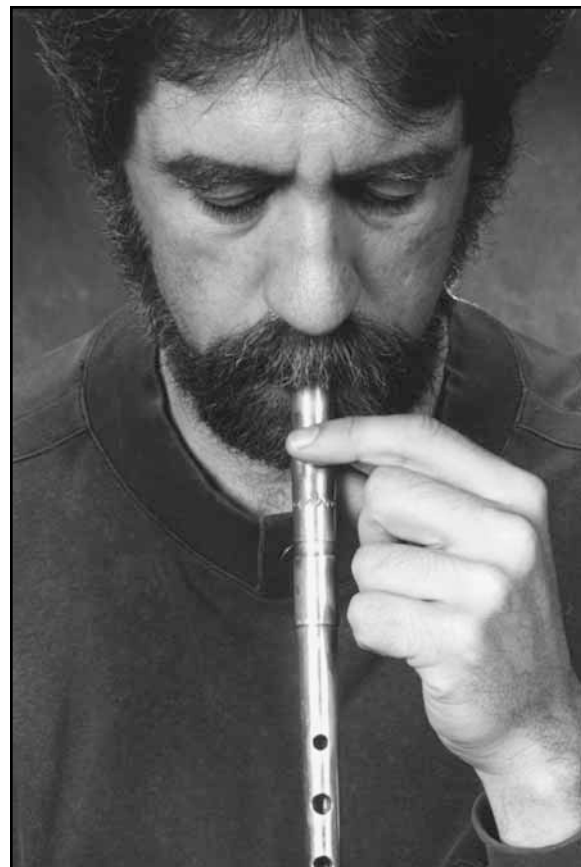


Figure 5-8. Covering the window of the mouthpiece while blowing to clear the windway.