

The difference between the two lies in the top hand position. With the piper's hold, the thumb of the top hand pushes the flute against the player's lower lip. In the normal hold, it is the base of the top hand's index finger that performs this function.



Figure 6-3. Playing the flute using the piper's hold. Note the top hand position.

During my first few years of playing I used the piper's hold, but later made the switch to the normal hold. My initial motivation for making the change was that I became interested in using the B-flat key on my flute. That required the use of my top thumb, something that was impossible using the piper's hold. Usage of some of the other keys was also awkward with this hold.

Though I had thought that I was quite comfortable using the piper's hold, I realized later that the normal hold was more relaxing for my left hand. I will elaborate on this point later in the chapter, once I have discussed the anchor points for holding the flute.

FINGERING NOTATION

In this book, I will call the hand nearest the embouchure hole the *top hand*. The hand nearest the other end, the foot of the flute, I will call the *bottom hand*. Either of these can be the right or left hand, though more people by far play with the left hand as the top hand and the right hand as the bottom hand.

I call the top-hand index finger T1, the top-hand middle finger T2, and the top-hand ring finger T3. Similarly, I call the bottom-hand index finger B1, the bottom-hand middle finger B2, and the bottom-hand ring finger B3. This notation system works equally well for right-handed and left-handed players.