

2. Alternately, you can allow a note to keep sounding, without interruption, until you begin the next note. You articulate these notes by quickly and softly *flicking* your tongue past the roof of your mouth, barely touching it at all. This is called **conjunct tonguing**.

Exercise 2: Try Disjunct Tonguing – Audio File 2

Without making any sound with your voice, finger C# again (all holes open), blow into the whistle and repeatedly “say” *tooooood, tooooood*, starting and then stopping the flow of air with your tongue.

Exercise 3: Try Conjunct Tonguing – Audio File 3

Without making any sound with your voice, finger C# and blow continuously into the whistle, softly “saying” *doooo doooo doooo*, and making no interruption to the flow of air. With each gentle “d” consonant, you contact the roof of your mouth for only the briefest of moments. Each “d” begins a new note, and at the same time it ends the previous note. The notes are smoothly connected, with no discernible gap of silence between them.

Many fine whistle players primarily use conjunct tonguing, reserving disjunct tonguing to emphasize certain notes and to bring variety to their music.

Note that conjunct tonguing uses fewer tongue movements than disjunct tonguing.

Exploring Air Speed and Pressure

As newcomers to the whistle, many of us do not yet know how forcefully or softly to blow, and how much to alter air speed and pressure as we play various high and low notes. In the following three exercises we’ll explore the entire range of air speeds and pressures, from the lowest to the highest and everything in between. We’ll listen to the sounds that result, and start to get acquainted with the middle area of that range which we’ll actually use when playing.

In whistle playing, air speed and air pressure are inextricably linked. **It is always true that blowing higher-speed air into the whistle results in higher air pressure arriving at the labium of the mouthpiece. The opposite is also true: lower speed always results in lower pressure.** From here on out, when I refer to changes in air speed alone, remember that increased or decreased air speeds produce corresponding increases or decreases in air pressure.

As mentioned on p. 7, the whistle has two commonly used ranges of notes, or registers: the low register and the high register. There’s a third register as well, even higher than the high register. (We could call it the “super-high” register.) However, many people, myself included, find these super-high notes to be unpleasantly loud and shrill. We won’t be using those notes in this book. In fact, we won’t even be using the very highest note of the high register (high C#), which also tends to be rather loud and shrill.

Exercise 4: Playing a Low-Register B – Audio File 4

Please listen to Audio File 4 before proceeding with this exercise.

To prepare for the exercise, use T1 to cover and seal its hole. You are now fingering the note B. It’s very important that your finger (the fingerprint, not the fingertip) seals this hole in an airtight manner. How will you be able to tell if you’re sealing it completely? Both by sound and by touch. It may take time for you to develop enough tactile sensitivity to tune in and feel, distinctly and clearly, the entire circular edge of each finger hole. Until you do, you’ll rely more upon the nature of your sound.

When you play this exercise you’re going to begin a low-register B with a tongue articulation. As you did in Exercise 1, you’ll smoothly sustain the note as long as you comfortably can, trying to keep its loudness constant from start to finish. You’ll end the note by allowing your tongue to gently touch the roof of your mouth.

Now it’s time to try this. Fingering B, and beginning with a tongue articulation (use the consonant “t”), blow into the whistle with a moderately low air speed. How can you know if it’s moderately low? **Imagine the range of possible air speeds plotted on a scale that starts with 1 and rises to 10, 1 being the minimum speed possible and 10 being as hard as you can blow.** For this exercise, let’s aim for a 3. Try to match the sound that you hear on Audio File 4.

If the note you get is considerably higher and louder than the one you hear on Audio File 4, you are blowing at too high a speed. You’re probably playing a high-register B. Play the note with that same high speed again, then gradually reduce the speed until the note drops down into the low register. You can hear me do this in Audio File 4.