

Flute Fundamentals



Educational Clinic Series



Advanced Fundamentals: Double and Triple Tonguing, Vibrato Exercises, Dynamic Contrasts, Harmonic Fingerings

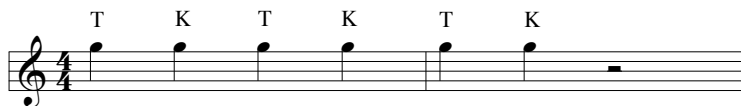
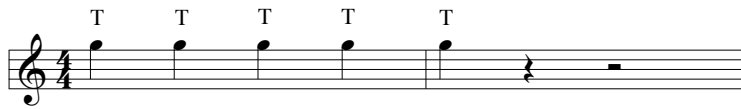
Double and Triple Tonguing

Double tonguing uses a combination frontstroke and backstroke of the tongue, allowing you to articulate at a much faster pace. The air is interrupted once at the front of the mouth with the syllable "tah," and then again at the back of the mouth with "kah." The result is "tah kah tah kah." There are several different syllables you can use when double tonguing, and the option you choose may vary depending on your preference or what repertoire you are playing.

Here is an example of how to apply double tonguing to a group of fast moving notes.



Once you've grasped the basic concept of double tonguing, it's time to start refining your technique. Because the "kah" lies further back on your tongue, it can feel clumsy and is difficult to get as clear as the front stroke. The goal is to not let the listener know you're double tonguing at all. Here is a good exercise to strengthen the backstroke.



When triple tonguing on the flute, the syllables are most commonly organized “Tah Kah Tah,” with the Kah in the middle.

TKT TKT TKT TKT

There will be times when you’ll want to rearrange these syllables to suit your needs. For example, if you have a long string of triplets, you might still use a double tonguing pattern so there aren't two tah's in a row.

TKT KTK TKT KTK

Another option is to put the two front strokes together at the beginning of the group of three. This can be useful in passages that need emphasis on the downbeat.

TTK TTK TTK TTK

Here are some different methods of organizing syllables that you could apply to this passage from Mendelssohn’s *Italian Symphony*.

T T K T T T T K T T T T K T T T T

T K T K T T K T K T T K T T T

K T T K T K T T K T K T T K T T T

Vibrato

Vibrato is a sound fluctuation produced by pulses in the airstream. It is an expressive tool that gives the sound forward motion. Vibrato should be integrated into the sound, rather than sounding separate from it. Your throat should be open and relaxed to allow air to flow freely, as if you were yawning. Let your air support come from low in your core, as opposed to high in your chest. For this exercise, choose any note that is comfortable and easy for you.

♩ = 80

Vibrato Pulse

♩ = 80

Vibrato Pulse

♩ = 80

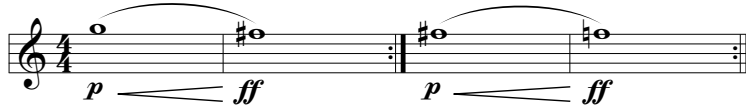
Vibrato Pulse

♩ = 80

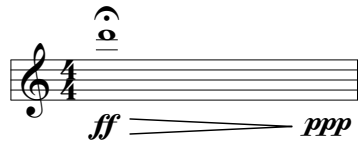
Vibrato Pulse

Dynamic Contrast

To develop great dynamic contrast, take time every day to practice playing loud and soft. The louder you play, the more air you need; playing forte requires a faster and larger airstream. Use your breath efficiently, and take more breaths as needed to compensate for the extra energy you're using.



Practicing tapers and diminuendos will help tone your embouchure for sustained pianissimo playing. Start with a comfortably full sound and begin a diminuendo, keeping the same quality of tone throughout the note as it gets softer. Your aperture will get smaller and your airstream will increase. This coordination helps ensure that the note doesn't crack or fizzle out too soon. Good support is crucial here.

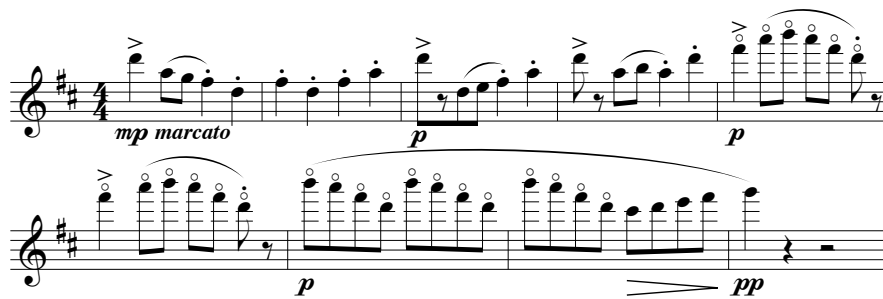


Harmonic Fingerings

Practicing basic harmonics can help strengthen and train your embouchure. Finger the lower notes in the second example, and overblow slightly with good support to achieve the upper notes.



Certain harmonic fingerings can be quite useful to simplify fast, technical passages such as Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*.



The image shows a musical score for Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, consisting of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff has a melodic line with dynamic markings *mp marcato*, *p*, and *p*. The bottom staff has a complex harmonic passage with dynamic markings *p* and *pp*. The score includes various fingerings and slurs, indicating technical challenges.