

Woodsfield Elementary Band
BEGINNER SAXOPHONE NOTES

Practice going over these steps for a while as a beginner. Memorize how it feels. While it is good to go over these things, do not put too much thought toward them while you are playing music. It can get in the way! If you are having difficulty while playing, refer to this list to figure out where the problem may be. Have fun getting to know your new instrument!

LEFT HAND:

1. LEFT HAND ON TOP!
2. Fingers – Keep relaxed!
 - Thumb should be diagonal from instrument and sit flat upon the octave key.
 - Fingers fall into a natural curve to meet the pearls of the left hand keys.

RIGHT HAND:

1. RIGHT HAND ON BOTTOM!
2. Fingers – Keep relaxed!
 - Place thumb beneath thumb rest.
 - Must be between tip of the thumb and the first joint.
 - Fingers fall into a natural curve to meet the pearls of the right hand keys.

PLAYING POSITION:

1. Sit with proper posture! STRAIGHT/RELAXED SPINE from back of head down to tailbone.
2. Neck strap – SUPPORTS THE ENTIRE WEIGHT OF THE INSTRUMENT.
 - Neck Strap should be adjusted in order to be comfortable but still allow you to hold the saxophone correctly.
2. Saxophone Angle
 - Hold the Saxophone to your right side.
 - Adjust the mouthpiece to keep it at 90 degrees when it enters your mouth.
3. Fingers – Hold fingers right above keys. They need to be ready to move very quickly!
4. Elbows (IMPORTANT!) - Keep elbows from touching your sides. *STAY RELAXED!*

EMBOUCHURE: YOU MUST HAVE GOOD REEDS!!! AND THEY MUST BE WET!

- Remember to leave just a hairline of black above the reed when assembling the mouthpiece.
1. Form your lips as if you are “whistling.”
 2. Bottom Lip
 - Roll 1/3 of your bottom lip over the bottom teeth.
 - Some of the “pink” part of the lip needs to still be showing.
 3. Corners of Mouth – Corners pull toward the center of your lips.
 4. Mouthpiece
 - Mouthpiece enters mouth at 90 degrees.
 - Place approximately 3/8 inch of the mouthpiece in your mouth and bite down gently with the top teeth. (Hint: 3/8 in. is a little under 1/2 in.)
 - Check that your teeth are approximately aligned from top to bottom.
 5. Take a full breath of air through the mouth. Then, seal your lips **LIKE A DRAWSTRING** around the mouthpiece. REMEMBER! FAST AIR!

MAKING CORRECTIONS:

If you are having trouble making a sound:

- You may be biting the mouthpiece too hard.
- Your mouthpiece may be in too far or not far enough.
- Your cheeks should not be puffed out. The muscles of your mouth should feel like a “Firm Drawstring” around the mouthpiece.
- STAY RELAXED!!!**