

## The 5 Steps to the Perfect Note

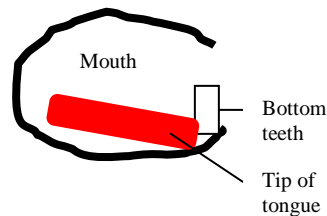
### 1. Full Diaphragm Breath

This is a different type of breathing than to what we're accustomed. A full breath which originates in the diaphragm is achieved by ensuring that **neither the neck nor shoulders rise** while inhaling slowly and squeezing your abdominal muscles. What will expand, instead, is the belly area, under the rib cage. You can tell if you're doing this properly by placing your hands around your sides, tucked close under the rib cage. If, while breathing, your hands are forced outwards, you are breathing from the diaphragm, and not your chest or neck.

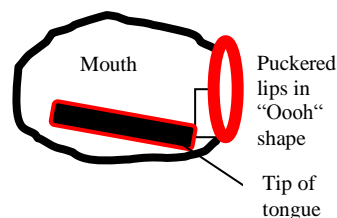
### 2. Seal w/ Tongue

Before beginning practice of this "5 Steps" pre-note process, it is advisable that you are familiar with and have practiced the placement and mechanics of tonguing, listed as follows:

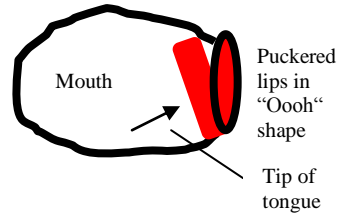
- i. Place tip of tongue behind *bottom teeth*, where teeth meet gums.



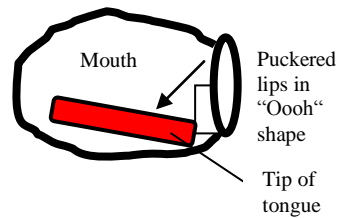
- ii. Pucker lips in an "Oooh" shape, keeping tongue anchored to bottom teeth.



- iii. Close hole made by puckered lips by moving the *middle* of the tongue forward, contacting the inside of your lips. This should effectively stop any flow of air in or out. **\*THIS IS CONSIDERED STEP 2 of 5**



- iv. Release tongue by pulling away from lips, to return to bottom of mouth. Be sure to keep the tip of the tongue anchored to the bottom teeth at all times! **\*THIS IS CONSIDERED STEP 5 of 5**



### 3. PUSH From Diaphragm

With tongue sealed, push, or squeeze once again the abdominal muscles, where the diaphragm is located. This will create the pressure necessary for the note to speak immediately once the tongue releases. Hold this all throughout the next two steps, and during the note. You may experience fatigue early in your practice of this. This is normal. The more you exercise these muscles, the stronger they get and the longer you'll be able to hold this position.

#### 4. Set Embouchure and PUSH

In order to give your mouthpiece proper support, without undue pressure on reed, you must give equal pressure all the way around using the muscles of your chin and cheeks. This “ligature-like” ring your mouth makes is to your mouthpiece what your ligature is to your reed.

Having already placed your lips in an “oooh” shape (and while continuing to push from the diaphragm), spread the corners of your lips apart, thus flattening the chin and creating an indent under the lip.



#### 5. Release Tongue

See Diagram 2-iv (above)

One tongue drops, if the diaphragm has been kept at full strength, air pressure will force the reed to vibrate instantly.\* It may be more than you're used to and cause a squeak. Don't worry. This is common at first. The goal is for instantaneous sound. You will learn to control the sound in time.

Maintain diaphragm pressure until air runs out.

\* If you hear air but no sound (the reed doesn't vibrate), the air pressure from steps 3 and 4 was not sufficient to make the reed vibrate. Reset and focus on diaphragm pressure to create proper air pressure (air support) for the note to sound as soon as you drop your tongue. You should not need to contact the reed to force the reed to vibrate. All that is needed is enough air pressure. Be sure to **not contact the reed!**