

CLARINET POWER! **Upgrade with Powerful Clarinet Pedagogy**

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Clinic Description: Clarinet basics will be discussed such as embouchure, voicing, articulation, relaxation, posture, and sound projection. There will be a special emphasis on the “Single Lip-Double Lip” embouchure and related embouchure tips. This is a hands-on clinic, so bring your clarinet to the class!

I. CLARINET POWER! Intro and ARTC Basics

- A. What is CLARINET POWER!? Clarinet Power! is a knowledge of AND the ability to properly and quickly teach clarinet basics that really work. These basics are effective because they are based on the way things really work (i.e. good science) and common sense. Metaphor is ok.
- B. What is ARTC?
 - A - Approach & Attitude - Mention John Wooden
 - R - Relaxation (Body & Breathing) Discuss Relaxation and Posture (“Mechanics” Roger Pavlik)
 - T - Tone (Emb. & Articulation) SEE BELOW – Mention Sound Projection
 - C - Counting (Pulse & Pattern) “Teach your students to Count – NO TO ROTE-ONLY Teaching”
- C. Practice Routine – Mention about addressing basics, esp. emb. and scales in daily practice.

II. CLARINET POWER! “Single Lip-Double Lip” Embouchure

- A. READ Embouchure Handout “Single Lip Double Lip”

III. CLARINET POWER! E-Tips for E-Lips Embouchure Tips

- A. READ E-Tips Handout

IV. CLARINET POWER! GET THE POWER!!

- A. Have those in audiences with clarinets get them out and try the embouchure. Lead them back through the 5-C embouchure steps and the E-Tips.
- B. Have a person or 2 come up and volunteer
- C. Go around and help them try it.

V. CLARINET POWER! Questions and Answers

Clarinet Practice Routine

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Warm-up/Basics

Relaxation/Air/Balance

Tone (Emb. & Voicing/Articulation)

Long Tones (Sound Projection)

Tonguing

Various Exercises (Over The Break, Overtones, High C, High Notes, Legato Fingers,
Tuning, Reeds, etc.)

Scales

Chromatic

Major & Minor plus Arpeggios

Fully Diminished 7th Chords

Others (Whole-tone, Octatonic (a.k.a. Diminished), related to a work, etc.)

Music

Sight-reading/Transposition

Etudes/Studies

Solos

Excerpts (Band, Orchestra, Chamber, etc.)

Improvisation/Jazz

[NOTE: A copy of this routine and the practice tips are available at clarinetmike.com/resources.]

Single Lip-Double Lip Clarinet Embouchure Dr. Michael Dean "ClarinetMike"

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What produces the sound on the clarinet? Clarinet sound is produced by the reed vibrating against the slot in the mouthpiece activated by the air (see E-Tip #3 in handout below). Unlike brass players, the clarinet embouchure is not the sound maker (resonator).

What is the purpose of clarinet embouchure? The purpose of clarinet embouchure is to provide a great environment (or "Happy Place") for the reed to vibrate. The **Single Lip-Double Lip** (aka "5-C") embouchure below will help a clarinetist develop a good platform or "Happy Place" for the reed to vibrate.

The **Single Lip-Double Lip** embouchure could be thought of as a single lip version of a double lip embouchure. **Single Lip-Double Lip** allows the reed to vibrate freely as in double lip embouchure. However, it avoids the problems of double lip: hard to do, hurts for some, lack of stability for marching/standing, etc.

Single Lip-Double Lip [5-C] Embouchure Steps:

1. Circumference
2. Corners to Cheekbones
3. Chin
4. Cover
5. Click

Single Lip-Double Lip [5-C] Embouchure Details:

1. **Circumference:** Lightly stretch bottom lip flat around lower teeth circumference.
2. **Corners to Cheekbones:** Use "Smile Muscles" ([Zygomaticus major muscles](#)) to stretch lightly upwards from mouth corners to cheekbones. These muscles are the ones used when smiling. This should also help flatten out the chin.
3. **Chin:** Smooth out chin muscles, focusing the chin to a point. But, DO NOT hinge the jaw forward – use a normal face. NOTE: Steps 1 and 2 will likely flatten the chin just about right – this step could be called "Check Chin."
4. **Cover:** Put some bottom lip over bottom teeth – "Not too much, not too little, just right."
5. **Click:** Top teeth rest on mouthpiece. Think, "Click" (See [E-Tip #4](#) in handout below). Don't bite down hard – think of top teeth "receiving" the mouthpiece. IMPORTANT: Upper lip also sits gently on top of mouthpiece and moves upwards toward top teeth with no downward pressure.

NOTE: The embouchure above and embouchure tips below have been heavily influenced by the ideas of master single reed teacher Joe Allard. (This embouchure can be used on all clarinets and saxophones.) See my blog post, [ClarinetMike's 101 Clarinet Tips: #25 ClarinetMike's 5-C Embouchure](#) at my [ClarinetMike Blog](#), clarinetmike.wordpress.com, for important acknowledgements, etc.

Clarinet Embouchure: E-Tips for E-Lips SHORT VERSION

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E-Tip #1: Engage. "Keep Lower Teeth Engaged." Beneath the reed, keep the lower teeth right under the bottom lip – do not allow space between the lip and teeth. Think "Reed, Lip, Teeth." You want to somewhat feel the reed through the lower lip with the bottom teeth. But, don't push up too much. Think in terms of creating a good platform for the reed to vibrate upon. Keeping the lower teeth engaged allows for sensitive adjustments to the sound, as there is a close connection to the resonator (reed vibrating against the slot of the mouthpiece).

E-Tip #2: Edges. "Don't Pinch the Edges of the Reed." Be sure to keep the lower lip flat against the reed so as not to crimp the sides of the reed. Once past the reed, the lips need to seal to keep air from leaking out. Remember, clarinet sound is produced by the vibration of the reed. The more the reed vibrates, the more sound is produced.

E-Tip #3: Eee's. "Use 'Eee' Syllables." I've found it very helpful to voice [i] these syllables in the specified ranges when playing in different registers on the (Bb soprano) clarinet:

"Tew" low register (below Open G) with a French pronunciation [ii] (see clarinetmike.com/media_clinic.html)

"Tee" Open G up to second space C in the staff

"Dee" C# in the staff and higher

Notice above, that each syllable has a progressively higher "Air Position" than the next. By "Air Position," I am referring to how high the air goes through the mouth. (I suggest trying this by whispering "Tew, Tee, and Dee" in succession. Notice that the air is higher on each one.) The basic idea is that the higher one plays on the clarinet, the higher the air should go through the mouth. I think it is easier to think "Air Position" than "Tongue Position."

These voicings help not only with embouchure, but also help out greatly with tonguing. It was a big breakthrough for me to finally realize that embouchure and articulation are very closely related. [There is a video of me pronouncing and explaining these syllables available on my website – go to clarinetmike.com/media_clinic.html and watch "Embouchure: Tongue Position = Air Position."]

Another important and useful syllable is "Hee." It has a very high air position and works really great for me for voicing Super High G (fourth ledger line above the staff). However, it is not usable in the same way as the others because it is not good for tonguing. (In warm-ups, I'll whisper "Hee" a few times to set the voicing and then play a Super High G with a "Dee" articulation.) "Hee" is also very useful pedagogically in explaining to a student about voicing and "Air Position." (Have the student whisper "Tew" or "Tee" and then have them whisper "Hee.")

E-Tip #4: Ex. "Say syllable 'Ex' – Lower Teeth Give, Top Teeth Receive." Don't bite down hard on the mouthpiece with the top teeth – i.e. don't push down with head. Think in terms of top teeth "receiving" the mouthpiece from the lower teeth as when saying the syllable, "Ex." As with all of these concepts, it is important to personalize this to a clarinetist's unique physiology, equipment, etc.

E-Tip #5: Eat. "Use 'Chewing Muscles' Up High." Starting about High E (third ledger line above the staff) and higher, put molars and back teeth very slightly closer together as if chewing something. Be sure to use "Dee" voicing (see E-Tip #3). The higher the note, the more "chew" is needed. The key to playing up high is to find the best spot in your air position, embouchure, mechanism (i.e. your body), etc. for each note. Or, as Joe Allard used to say, "Every note has its own special feeling." (This is true for all notes in all registers, actually.) As with the other E-Tips, this concept will take some experimentation.

[i] "Voicings" such as these are used to help with the position of the air, tongue, embouchure, mouth, etc. A clarinetist should be careful to not move the jaw the same amount s/he does when actually speaking these in normal conversation.

[ii] On "Tew," do not drop the bottom teeth away from the bottom lip (See Tip #1 above).

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