Selecting the Proper Reed

Rico offers a variety of reeds to meet the needs of players of all levels and musical styles. Rico reeds are made to exacting tolerances to ensure the highest consistency and playability from reed to reed.

Reeds are available in a range of strengths to accommodate players of all experience levels. It is important to match the proper reed strength to your mouthpiece. Below is a chart that explains Rico’s line of reeds according to player experience and tonal qualities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reed</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Tonal Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rico™</td>
<td>1.5 – 4.0</td>
<td>Beg – Int.</td>
<td>Designed for ease of play and tone production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal™</td>
<td>1.0 – 5.0</td>
<td>Int. – Adv.</td>
<td>Increased response and flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Voz®</td>
<td>Soft – Hard</td>
<td>Int. – Adv.</td>
<td>Full sound, popular for jazz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve™</td>
<td>2.0 – 4.5</td>
<td>Int. – Adv.</td>
<td>Centered tone, excellent response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select™</td>
<td>2.0 – 5.0</td>
<td>Int. – Adv.</td>
<td>More material in the heart, darker sound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a reed begins to close off against the mouthpiece with normal jaw pressure, it is generally time to move up a half-strength.

Parts of a Reed

- **Table**: The flat underside of the reed
- **Tip**: Tip of the reed
- **Rails**: Sides of the reed on the vamped (cut) section
- **File Mark**: The straight line cut in the bark at the back of the vamped section
- **Spine**: Middle of the reed running from front to back
- **Heel**: The back end of the reed

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**CHECK OUT**

- **www.tothestage.com**: The place for musicians to experience the latest artist videos, discover the hottest gear & giveaways, learn from the pros, and discuss all things music in the journey from student to the stage!

- **www.ricoreeds.com**: Check out the Rico site for video tips from your favorite artists and product info.

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**Single Reed Survival Guide**

*by Michele Gingras*

Professor of Clarinet, Miami University in Ohio
Make You Reeds Last Longer

Assessing Your Instrument

Care Tips for Your Instrument

Tip 1: Protecting Your Reeds
Use a mouthpiece cap when not playing to prevent reed damage. To protect your reeds, store them in a Reed Gard™ or reed case.

Tip 2: Choosing the Proper Ligature
Choose a ligature that fits snug against the reed and mouthpiece. The new Rico ligatures feature a 4-point system that applies equal and even pressure to the reed.

Tip 3: Rotating Your Reeds
Once you have chosen and adjusted your favorite reeds, rotate them to prolong their durability. Play or break-in one reed for 10 to 15 minutes, then rinse it, and play the next reed. Always keep a number of reeds that are broken in on hand.

Tip 4: Marking Your Reed
Mark your reeds on the front or back of the reed with a pencil in order of preference, and see how the order will change after a few days of playing. Rearrange the order as needed.

Tip 5: Clean Reeds Last Longer
After playing, run your reed under water and gently wipe away excess moisture. This will allow cane pores to remain unclogged and clean.

Tip 6: Humidity Control
For maintenance-free reed storage, use the Rico Reed Vitalizer™ two-way Auto Humidity Control System. The patented Humidipak™ technology helps prevent cracking and warping by regulating the humidity level and keeping the reeds consistently moist.

Mouthpiece, Ligature & Reed:
1) Slide ligature over the mouthpiece about half-way down - loose enough to allow the reed to fit underneath.
2) Slide a moist reed (either with water or in your mouth) underneath the ligature on the flat part of the mouthpiece (flat part of the reed lays flat against the mouthpiece), and align it flush with the tip of the mouthpiece.

Clarinet Assembly:
1) Take the bell and gently twist in the lower joint.
2) Gently attach the upper joint, making sure to press down the upper joint rings to raise the bridge key.
3) Align and center the bridge keys.
4) Insert barrel all the way down then adjust as needed for tuning.

Saxophone Assembly:
1) Hold the body from the bell and avoid touching keys.
2) Gently insert the neck into the saxophone's body; lift the connector key above the octave rod to avoid damage; DO NOT apply cork grease on metal joint.

You are ready to play!

Tip 1: Pre-Assembly. Apply cork grease on each joint cork. Apply only when corks are dry, and do not apply on the saxophone's metal joints. Wipe the saxophone neck joint and inside the receiver with a soft cloth to ensure easy assembly.

Tip 2: Assembly. Avoid bending keys by firmly pressing down keys during assembly.

Tip 3: Swabbing. Take apart the instrument and use an absorbent drop swab to clean each section after every use.

Tip 4: Cleaning. Clean hard-to-reach areas inside the joints with a microfiber or cotton swab to avoid unhealthy particles or cork grease build-up. Clean and pat dry moist pads with very thin paper.

Tip 5: Reed Preparation. Reeds play best when they are moist. Soak your reed in room temperature water for one minute before playing.

Tip 6: Reed Cleaning. Rinse away excess saliva with water. This will allow reed pores to remain unblocked and extend the life of your reed. Remove the reed from the mouthpiece after playing to avoid mold.

Tip 7: Mouthpiece Care. Always clean your mouthpiece after use, and cover it with a cap to protect it and to avoid chipping your reed.

Tip 8: Key Care. Do not place anything in the case that can press on your instrument and crush the key's posts or other parts of the instrument.

Tip 9: Storage. Do not leave your instrument in places of extreme heat, cold, or humidity. Wooden clarinets can crack during sudden temperature changes.

Assembly Tips
- Never force the parts of your instrument together.
- Keep extra reeds on hand as well as a cleaning swab and cork grease.
- Always use a mouthpiece cap when not playing to avoid chipping your reed.