Flute buying guide for beginners

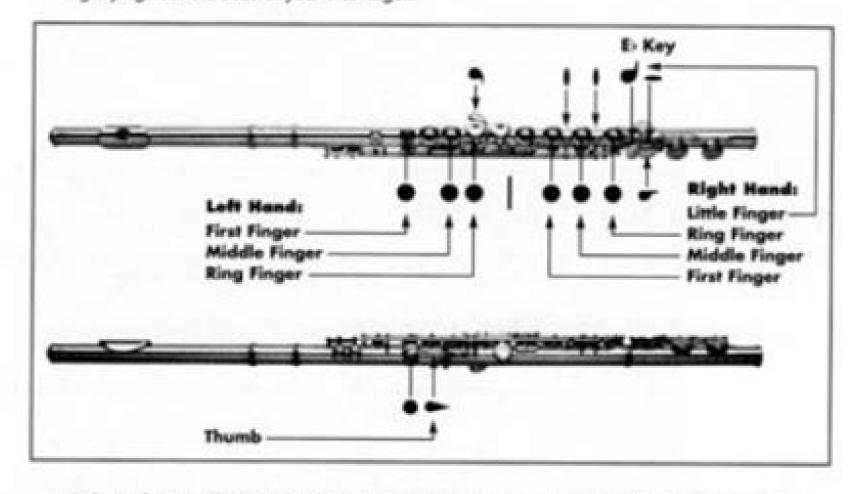
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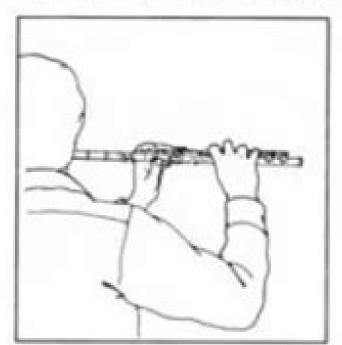


## How to Hold Your Flute

Rest your left thumb on the long straight key on the underside of the flute. Curve your thumb
in slightly. It is very important not to cramp your thumb by bending it backwards. Keep your
wrist straight and let your fingers arch naturally over the center of the keys. The flute will rest
lightly against the base of your first finger.



- Arch the fingers of your right hand and put them on the correct keys (your little finger will
  rest lightly on the Exkey). Support the flute with your right thumb, which is placed on the
  underside of the flute between your first and second fingers.
- Holding the flute to your right, put it up to your mouth. You can think of your left hand as a
  pivot, with your right hand pushing gently forward and the embouchure plate pressing lightly
  against your lower lip. Hold the flute as shown.





## **Putting Away Your Instrument**

- Carefully shake any condensation out of your instrument.
- Using the cleaning rod, run a soft, clean cloth into the head joint and through the middle and foot joints.
- Carefully wipe the outside of each section to keep the finish clean. Never use silver polish to clean your flute.



## What flute to buy for beginners.

Photo: Dreamworks Pictures If the emergence of "Sasha Flute" or the popularity of Lizzo has inspired you to take up the flute, we say go for it — the woodwind instrument is surprisingly easy to learn. "Here's the funny thing about the flute," says Carol Wincenc, a Grammy-nominated flutist and Juilliard professor, who was hailed "Queen of the Flute" by New York in 1984. "You know how they say, 'Just hang it outside of a moving vehicle, like a car going 70 miles per hour, and it will play itself? It's for real. That's how basic the flute is." But which one to get? To find the best flutes for beginners, we spoke with Wincenc, orchestra flutists, and resident artists. Below, their 11 picks. Yamaha YFL-222 Intermediate Flute for Student Most of the flutists we spoke with named Yamaha as the go-to brand for a high-quality flute for beginners. Wincenc says that for the "serious student," Yamaha would be the most reliable flute in the \$300 to \$500 range. "In terms of a solid instrument for your money, it's the best for your buck," she says. The Yamaha has closed hole keys, an offset G key, and a C foot joint, which are all specifications that Kim Lewis, resident flutes at the Flute Center of New York, suggests beginners look for in a flute. Eastman Student Flute Model Lewis also recommends beginner flutes from Gemeinhardt, Trevor James, Eastman, Pearl, and Di Zhao, which all have closed hole keys, an offset G key, and a C foot joint, like the Yamaha. Beyond those basic features, it comes down to personal sound preferences. "Each company has their own idea of sound and mechanism design, so every flutist can find a flute that fits them well," Lewis says. \$998 at Flute Center of New York Gemeinhardt 2SP Flute with Straight Headjoint The positioning of the keys on flutes like the Gemeinhardt 2SP helps teach beginners where to hold their hands on the instrument. Lewis explains: "Intermediate and advanced flutes have open holes in the keys that are pressed with the player's fingers. Until a student develops proper hand position, it is difficult for them to be able to cover these holes, so beginner flutes do not have holes in the keys. Additionally, offset G refers to the G key on the flute (which is played by the left-hand ring finger). This key is set forward from all of the other keys so it is easier to reach, as the left arm has to stretch across the body to get to its position on the flute." Pearl PF500 500 Series Student Flute with Case The flutes Lewis named also have C foot joint, whereas a more advanced flute would have a B foot joint, allowing one to play a low B," Lewis says. "The C foot joint is shorter by having one less key, and only allows to play down to a low C. The shorter foot joint makes the flute lighter for beginner players, and often these lower notes are not frequently utilized in the repertoire until the intermediate and advanced playing levels." Bart Feller, who is principal flute of the New Jersey Symphony, New York City Opera Orchestra, and Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, and teaches in Julliard's Pre-College Division, recommends Di Zhao, Trevor James, and Aizumi as some of his favorite brands for beginners. All three brands' beginner flutes "play well in tune, and have a substantial," not tinny, sound," he says. GEAMUS Soprano Descant Recorder If you're just looking to dabble in the flute and want to try something inexpensive that won't necessarily last forever, there are some options. "Ten years ago there was a Walmart \$79 flute," Wincenc says. "And I haven't investigated it as of late, but there are the plastic flutes. I'm a backpacker and I'm thinking of buying one of these things, and they come in all kinds of fun colors, like hot pink, royal blue ... I mean, yes, you can make a sound on those things." "It wouldn't be fair for me to not mention the Burkart Resona flute," says Wincenc (full disclosure: Wincenc is a Burkart artist, meaning that she is sponsored by the company). She calls this model "a high-end beginner to intermediate flute." The name "Resona" implies resonance, she says, which is "the monkey on the back of every flute player, is how beautiful and resonant is their sound." If you have the budget to splurge, this might be the flute for you: "The adult beginner who's like an M.D. — you know, like my hand surgeon is an amateur — for their buck, oh my God that Resona flute is extraordinary." Yamaha YFL-362 Intermediate Flute Offset G B-Foot Maxim Rubtsov, the principal flute of the Russian National Orchestra, also says he would "highly recommend Yamaha flutes for Butte for Rubtsov: "My father brought me a Yamaha flute from his work travels in Asia, and I played this flute through my formative years," he recalls. "I auditioned for university, and even won my first orchestral seat playing on my Yamaha flute." (Rubtsov is a Yamaha piccolo artist currently.) This model is one step above the beginner Yamaha 222 — it still has the offset G, which is recommended for beginners, but has open key holes and a B foot, which allows intermediate and advanced players to play lower notes Actually good deals, smart shopping advice, and exclusive discounts. Vox Media, LLC Terms and Privacy Notice By submitting your email, you agree to our Terms and Privacy Notice and to receive email correspondence from us. The Strategist is designed to surface the most useful, expert recommendations for things to buy across the vast ecommerce landscape. Some of our latest conquests include the best acne treatments, rolling luggage, pillows for side sleepers, natural anxiety remedies, and bath towels. We update links when possible, but note that deals can expire and all prices are subject to change. Welcome to the daunting task of purchasing a flute. With all the many different makes and models, strange flute terminology, pushy sales people and too good to be true second-hand prices, it can be a challenge just to know where to start. Hopefully, this guide will be able to take some of the stress out of the process, answer your questions and point you in the right direction. Purchasing a flute is very similar to purchasing a car; they all have similar yet slightly different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features, can be made from components of varying quality, need to be serviced and well looked after and the many different features. same. Just before we dive into the nitty-gritty of purchasing a flute, probably the best piece of advice I could give parents is to wait until your child can play, even just a little bit, before you purchase one. That way they can test play the flute, just as you would test drive a car. This will help enormously when you are trying to choose between different flutes. For example, you may have two different flutes which are both made by reputable brands, have the same features but differ in price. While you could buy the more expansive one assuming that it will be better your child might prefer the feel of the cheaper flute. I recommend hiring a flute for one to twelve months until your child is ready to assist you with shopping. First, let's establish what a bad flute is and why you don't want one. A bad flute is made of poor quality materials which then has a number of flow-on effects for both the flautist and their wallet: It can be almost twice as hard and takes an excessively large amount of physical effort just to produce a sound Can be unnecessarily heavy and clunky Generally, has bad tone (sound) Has a limited ability to play across a range of loud and soft dynamic levels A limited capability to produce different tone colours Is challenging for an advanced flautist to play in tune let alone a beginner Will potentially require frequent repairs, varying in cost and limiting the amount of time you will be able to spend practising because it will be off getting fixed Ultimately a bad flute could discourage even the most talented students. It will cause students' progress to be excessively slow and is likely to result in students becoming frustrated and disheartened. Eventually, you would reach a point where unless a new flute is purchased you won't be able to progress. Comparatively a good flute is easier to play, sounds better, is more comfortable to play, will cost less in maintenance, last longer and, depending on the brand hold its value. Consequently, students will progress much faster and find the process considerably more enjoyable. An added bonus is that practising will sound nicer a lot sooner which will be appreciated by all the members of your household. You should also be able to sell the flute when you are ready to upgrade to an intermediate model. Things to Watch Out For Look out for really cheap flutes, they are always too good to be true and I can almost guarantee you, you'll be purchasing a bad flute weather its new or second hand. Another thing worth noting is that all flutes fall into three broad categories: beginner, a flute is not something you can 'grow' into. It would be the same as buying a monster truck for inner city driving - completely inappropriate. It's also important to get the right sized flute. Although all flutes are technically the same size you can get flutes with a curved head joint. These are ideal for anyone who is on the smaller side or below the age of nine. Using a flute that is 'too big' may result in poor technique, slowed progress and discomfort or pain both during and after playing. It may also result in postural problems that will be challenging to un-learn latter in your flute playing journey. What is it made of? Flutes are most commonly made from nickel and plated with silver. Some intermediate and advanced flutes are most commonly made from nickel and plated with silver. western classical tradition. Please avoid the cheap plastic flutes that come in a variety of different colours. Even though they look fun and consequently are very appealing to children they do not produce a normal flute sound and are the equivalent of an expensive toy. The different materials used to make the instrument effect not only the cost but also the sound of the instrument. Pretty much all beginner flutes are nickel with silver plating. Provided you're not allergic to nickel or silver this is the ideal for beginners as it is the most durable and cost-effective option. Things to check on the flute If you're purchasing a flute brand new then you won't need to scrutinize it guite so vigorously however if you're planning to purchase one from the second-hand market you will want to check for the following: Assembling, the flute and check to see that all three joints slide together nicely. Being either too loose or too tight is bad. If they feel like they are going to just fall off then they're too loose. If it takes an excessive amount of force (with lots of twisting, always twist) then they're too loose. If it takes an excessive amount of force (with lots of twisting, always twist) then they're too loose. If it takes an excessive amount of force (with lots of twisting, always twist) then they're too loose. 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The keys should have the slightest amount of resistance when you push them down (spring tension) they should also spring back up as soon as you take your fingers off. (Note some keys will do the opposite). If the keys are too hard to press down, uneven as they rise and fall, or don't spring back up they will need to be adjusted by a technician. Finally, you should play the flute. Depending on your ability you want to try playing something fast, slow, loud and soft. You also want to test the full range of the instrument listening out for an even sound. Do not worry if you don't feel like you have the technical abilities to do this, simply do what you can because after all, you are the one who is going to be playing it. Ideally, you should get your flute teacher to look over the flute for you however, we all know that even at the best of times life can be less than ideal. Questions to Ask Like a car, if a flute is used and serviced regularly it is less likely to have problems. Similarly, if it hasn't been played in a while or serviced within the last twelve months it will need a service. Consequently, asking the following questions will help you ascertain how well the flute has been looked after: When was the flute last service? When was the flute last used regularly? How many owners has the flute had and do you know if they looked after it? Here's a list of bands that most flute teachers and technicians will recommend. One useful thing to note is that when buying a second-hand flute newer does not necessarily mean better. This is because the guality of materials has been gradually decreasing over the years but it's the same with many household appliances, they don't make them like they used to. For example, a Yamaha flute that was made during the 1970s that has been well looked after will probably be fine because they were made like tanks. Yamaha is an excellent brand, they have a good reputation and for the most part, they strive to maintain it. You will also get great value for cost and due to their reputation, they hold their value quite well making them good for resale when you upgrade your flute. The best Yamaha's were made pre-2010 in Japan. The newer models don't seem to be as durable as the older ones but that is true of many flutes. (My first flute was a Yamaha!) Pearl: Pearl is another big name in the fluting world. Like Yamaha, they will hold their value. However, they do tend to be slightly more expensive than Yamaha flutes and seem to come up less on the second-hand market. (My current flute is a pearl). DiMedici/Jupiter: Older made Jupiter flutes are definitely of superior guality to their newer flutes due to some major structural changes that happened within the company. Anything post-2010 will be durable, reliable and good value for cost. Armstrong: I personally have no problem with Armstrong flutes. They are made like a truck so will withstand being handled by accident prone/less careful children. They are also reasonably priced and frequently come up on the second-hand market. The only negative things I've heard about Armstrong flutes is their head joints are "stiff to blow" making them less suited to intermediate students who need to refine their tone. You may outgrow an Armstrong flute a year earlier than some of the other flute brands but they are good for band programs. Gemeinhardt: Gemeinhardt is a German flute company, their student models are known for being physically nice to play, well-made and usually produce a nice tone. Although over the last few years their mechanisms have become softer and they are fairly cost efficient and made like bricks. Although I don't recommend dropping you flute if your child drops things a lot then an Emerson should be able to handle it. They also seem to come up second hand fairly frequently. Trevor James: While there is nothing wrong with the Trevor James student flutes and they are known as being generally good all-around flute, they also don't have anything in particular that they are known for. So, you don't need to avoid them but their price is usually fairly average and while they're not super sturdy they also don't be a thorough article if I didn't mention something about flutes to avoid. But basically, anything that was made in China needs to be avoided because it will fall apart and they usually have very strange English names. As a general rule of thumb, stay away from anything that crawls, flies or walks e.g. dolphin and parrot flutes. Aldi instruments are also bad and they seem to periodically change their name, so far, I think they've used sky and lark. Basically, anything that sounds weird should be avoided. There are other flute brands out there that I haven't mentioned that are good, however, to play it safe choose one from the above list. I have tried to include all the most commonly found good flutes. Cost Sadly, music and instruments do cost money but they pay dividends in return and are well worth the investment. Musical instruments are not generally something you can go bargain shopping for. Most retailers sell the same model flute for about the same price. Some will include your first service for a lowered price or extra accessories but this should never be a selling point. The only times it's worthwhile buying a highly discounted flute is if there is a closing down sale or a massive special one-off sale. If you find a brand-new flute online for a price that is too good to be true it is probably a Chinese flute that has been rebranded. Related Article: The Non-Musical Benefits of Music Lessons For a brand-new student flute, you will be looking to spend between \$700 to \$800 with \$1000 as an absolute max. Second-hand flutes will cost you anywhere from \$200 (without service). (Gumtree is good.) Technicians are great people to purchase second-hand instruments through because the instruments should come fully serviced. When buying second hand a flute will need to be serviced. An average flute service will cost you between \$120 to \$200. I personally get all my flutes serviced by Amanda at Morrison Music. She always does a fantastic job and is quite reasonably priced and well worth the extra travel time. One last note: you should probably start thinking about upgrading from a student to intermediate flute at around grade five AMEB. This will be approximately 5 years after you've started playing. However many people get away there their student flutes until they start university. Other Resources: Final Thoughts In conclusion, I suggest you take your time when buying a flute, it's definitely not something to rush into. I personally set myself up a saved search on Gumtree. This sends me notifications every time a new flute is added and then it's just a matter of waiting for the right flute to come up. You're much better off renting a flute for a month or two and purchasing the right flute to come up. You're much better off renting a flute for a month or two and purchasing for a month or two and purchasing the right flute to come up. You're much better off renting a flute for a month or two and purchasing for a month or two and purchasing the right flute to come up. You're much better off renting a flute for a month or two and purchasing for a month or two and purchasing the right flute to come up. You're much better off renting a flute for a month or two and purchasing for a month or two and pu student flute, that is silver-plated, with closed holes, offset G, a C foot joint and preferably a split E mechanism. I'd love to hear your comments. Please let me know if you have any questions and which flute you end up purchasing. 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