

Essential Exercises for Beginning Oboe:

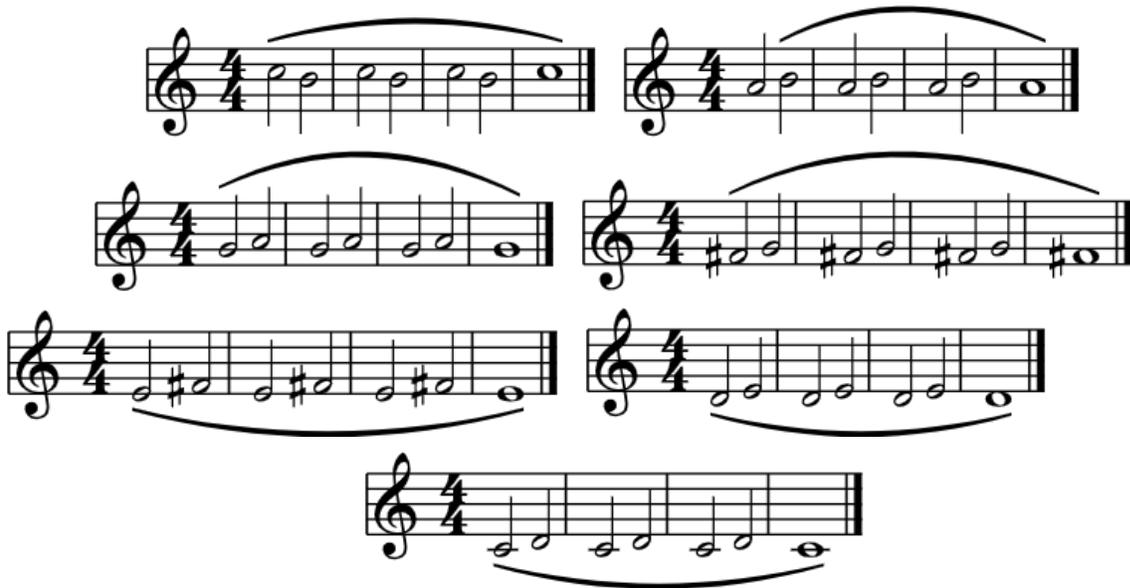
Note: all of these exercises assume good reed placement, an open embouchure, and a reed that crows vibrantly.

Even Exercise

From Ms. Marion West

What?: Students will alternate between two slurred notes at a time in a descending manner always thinking “squeeze,” “release.” Teach this exercise by rote in a call/response format using the words “I must do this ex-er-cise” as a memory tool. If you want, you can write note letters on the board (C B C B C B C---, A B A B A B A---...)

Why?: This exercise quickly gets a student’s fingers across the whole instrument. You need to get both hands involved early on, so that you can ensure their hand position is correct (RH thumb pointed toward 10:00, resting on the cuticle, wrists flat and straight.) They begin to develop familiarity and dexterity with the oboe’s primary keys, by moving one finger at a time while holding the instrument.



Troubleshooting: Issues will usually arise the more the student descends. Keep the exercise moving at as brisk of a pace as possible to not get bogged down in response. Encourage low note techniques as they descend. Use the Step-Down Exercise to approach the trouble note if they’re getting stuck.

Step-Down Exercise

What?: Start on a comfortable note (such as 'G') and add fingers onto the same airstream, descending to the low note in question (such as 'C'). Create lots of sound!

Why?: Stepping down builds confidence in low range by making low notes more approachable. It teaches that these notes will respond when given healthy, constant air.



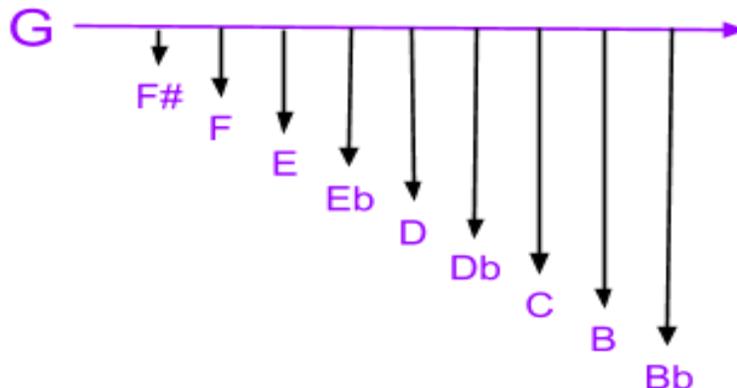
Troubleshooting: If issues present themselves check the following in this order:

- 1) Crow: is the reed vibrating with highs and lows?
- 2) Assembly: RH bridge aligned perfectly
- 3) Sealing: All necessary keys covered and fully squeezed? (esp 'G' and 'D')
- 4) Air: constant airstream while adding fingers
- 5) Low note techniques ("ooo," rolling out, opening, warmer/calmer air).

Bagpipe Exercise

What?: Practice slurring to lower and lower notes from a comfortable and stable note, such as a 'G' (or some other comfortable note for the student) This will be like a remington. Breathe whenever, but always start and end on the 'G.' Keep a steady air stream.

Why?: Use the Bagpipe Exercise to take the Step Down Exercise to the next level for a continued "No Fear!" approach to low notes. This also teaches the skill of moving more than one finger at a time. Keep a constant



Troubleshooting: Fingers should hover close to their respective keys, ready to move together as a team. Fingers should sink into the keys.

Octaves Exercise

What?: After learning all of the above exercises, only a few chromatic pitches remain to know an entire octave from the oboe's low 'C' to the oboe's middle 'C.' Use this exercise to not only teach those last few fingers, but also double their musical vocabulary by teaching the mechanisms needed to jump to the next octave. With each iteration of this exercise, slur up the octave and back down.

Why?: Teach proper use of octave mechanisms. This exercise also reinforces the flexibility fundamentals learned with the Reeding Exercise.

- Half-hole: Use a rolling motion, like you're trying to leave your fingerprint behind. Never hopping or sliding as that would smear or ruin your fingerprint.
- Back octave: Gently squeezing and releasing the back octave key. When not in use, hover near and ready or gently keep your thumb on the black of the oboe.
- Side octave: With good hand position, you can gently lean on the side octave with the crook of your first finger. This requires minimal to no wrist involvement.

On the Board:

C	<u>Db</u>	D	<u>D#</u>	<u>E</u>	F	<u>F#</u>	G	<u>G#</u>	A	<u>Bb</u>	B	<u>C</u>
	Half-hole			Thumb				Side				
	X			T				S				

For the Teacher:



Troubleshooting:

Look out for the following bad habits and issues:

- Half-hole issues: sliding/hopping or wrist involvement
 - Hold up your LH first finger and move it back and forth like a windshield wiper. Side to side only, no swirling or dancing.
- Back octave issues: anchoring the thumb (like you would on clarinet)
- Side octave issues: getting the wrist involved. The wrist should not be turning or rocking to employ the key.
- Flexibility:
 - Each iteration of this exercise will require an execution of lower note techniques to higher note techniques and back for a successful octave. For example: "ooo-eee-ooo," or calmer air to faster air to calmer air.