



**Boaz Berney**  
Historical flutes

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## FAQ

Renaissance flutes

### **Care and maintenance of your wooden flute**

Wood is a live material subject to many changes. I try to do the best i can to minimize these changes by seasoning the wood i use for a long time before it becomes a flute; however, the instrument will keep on changing even after it leaves my workshop. If playing it in is done gradually and in the recommended way, the flute will slowly open up and its sound will improve. On the other hand, if it is played in too quickly, cracks and warping of the wood may occur.

### **Playing the flute in**

A new instrument needs to be played in gradually, in order to let the wood settle and it should be oiled in such way that a thin protective layer of oil will be developed on the surface of the flute's bore. In the first few weeks, the flute should be played in short sessions: not more than thirty minutes at a time. Wipe the inside of the flute dry with a cotton cloth at the end of every session. Allow the flute to dry out properly between sessions, on Baroque flutes, make sure you take the foot joint apart from the right hand joint. Don't do more than two such sessions per day. Oiling should be done about twice a week, using linseed oil in the manner described below. After the first month the flute can be played for longer amount of time. The important thing is to do it gradually: increase the length of playing session from week to week. Don't do more then two hours per day for the second month. Oil the flute once a week. If the flute seems like it not to sound as good as it normally does (as might happen from time to time in the beginning), it probably means that it needs oiling. Let it dry and then oil it, as described below.

### **Oiling your flute**

The oil I recommend for using on my flutes is raw (i.e. cold pressed) Linseed oil. It can be obtained from health food stores and in art supplies shops. Be careful buying Linseed oil in hardware shops, as this may contain turpentine. Linseed oil is hardening oil, which means that it would be applied to the instrument in small quantities. It is important to realize that different types of oil should be used in different ways on your flute. With non drying oils such as walnut, peanut or olive oils a flute will require more frequent oiling and larger quantities of oil. The manner of oiling described below is specific for linseed oil. Please consult me before using any other oil on your flute. After the first two months of playing in oiling will be done once in a month or two (depending on how much the instrument is being played) in the following manner:

1. Make sure the flute is completely dry. Never oil it directly after playing. Allow at least half a day between playing and oiling
2. Take the flute apart, including the right hand joint and the foot joint.
3. Take off the key: remove the little pin that connects it to the foot joint. Push the cork out of the end of the flute using a wooden dowel.
4. Take a small piece of cotton cloth, dip it in the oil, and squeeze all the excess oil out. The rag has to be damp with oil, but not soaking wet. Pass the oily rag through the bore of the flute using a stick. Make sure that the bore surface is equally coated with oil. Lightly oil the outside of the instrument as well.
5. Allow the oil to settle into the wood for about half an hour. This is best done when all joints are placed upright.
6. After half an hour wipe the oil away using a clean piece of cotton. It is highly important that no excess oil remains on the outside or inside of the instrument, as this will crystallize and will be very difficult to remove later.
7. Allow the oil to dry for at least half a day.
8. Replace the cork and key.

### **Bringing your flute back for a check-up**

It is highly recommended to have a little check up of the flute after the first year, as this is when the flute changes the most. Often the wood has shrunk a bit while playing in and the flute will need to be re-reamed. This is also the best time to do final fine adjustments to the sound and to the intonation, if necessary. I will do this free of charge, all you need to do is come and visit me, or post the flute to me. The check-up itself doesn't take longer than a few hours, and the flute can be sent back within a week. Please come back to me with any other problems you have with your instrument. You are also most welcome to call me if there are any questions.