

Essential Elements for Creating an Expressive Tone

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1. Tone quality is subjective and personal—and should be!
(dark, light, hollow, edgy, focused, gauzy, rich, mellow, metallic, silvery)
Talk to your teacher—and experiment. Take any ideas from others and work with them. LISTEN to as many flutists as you can. Find *your* sound.
2. Stability and control are crucial for a good, expressive sound. Keep the flute stable (no rolling!), but your lips flexible.
3. SIZE and SHAPE of the aperture (opening), SPEED and DIRECTION of the airstream all affect tone quality. These are all interrelated.
4. SUPPORT is muscular activity to keep the airstream constant. A CONSTANT SPEED OF AIR is needed independent of the volume of air. Garden hose analogy: less air (diminuendo) requires a smaller aperture to keep air speed constant. More air (crescendo) requires a larger aperture. The wide Missouri flows slower than a rushing canyon stream if they both have the same amount of water.
4. Getting the upper partials: **LIPS FORWARD, SMALLER HOLE**
i.e., shorten the air column and increase airspeed).
If you just blow more, you'll play louder in the upper register, and lose your sound quality. Make sure you're not rolled in.
5. "Cracking" is getting the partial you don't want. Learn to play the bugle well!
6. Donald Peck exercise for upper register control (all slurred):
middle A-flat—overblown—high E-flat (fingered correctly)
middle A—overblown—E
middle thumb B-flat—overblown—F
etc. The overblown fifth will be a little flat.
Make sure the overblown note is *softer* than the first note.