

HEALTHY REED CHECK LIST

TEST	DESCRIPTION	SOLUTIONS	NOTES
THE CROW	Use your proper bassoon embouchure to test the crow of your reed. It should sound easily and you should hear many different pitches. Some reed makers look for the crow to be centered around a certain pitch (Eb, E, or F). The Crow should sound easily and have a warm sound.	Reed lacking a good crow is not properly balanced. Continue the testing to determine which specific adjustments need to be made.	
TEST PITCHES C-D-E (In the Bass Clef Staff)	Fails if E sinks/is flat.	Wires may be too loose. Reed maybe too long-clip tip. Reed is too soft-1 st and 2 nd wires-as you break in the reed it will harden slightly. Rails may be too heavy for center thickness-look at shadow and thin with file.	
E-Eb SLUR (no extra fingers)	If E is too close to Eb (Not a ½ step)	Heart Area is too wide – round thumb nail. Heart Area is too thick-lightly scrape top ¼ of blade with knife.	
SLUR C DOWN TO LOW F	If the Low F is sharp, rough, unfocused or doesn't speak –need adjustment.	Tip may be too open- close 1 st wire or open 2 nd wire. Back of reed is too hard-adjust with file or knife-use light. Channels are too hard-thin with knife. Overall reed is too hard-sand or scrape overall reed lightly.	

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REED + BOCAL	Reed + Bocal should sound a pitch that is equal to LH 1-2-3 (C)	If Reed + Bocal combination is flat – blend edge of thumb nail to tip with a knife. If Reed + Bocal combination is sharp – thumbnail has been pulled to far away from the tip-clip if reed is still a little long.	
A-Bb-B-C (Flick register)	If these notes on the top of the bass clef staff crack or are unfocused – the tip area needs to be adjusted.	Thin tip with a knife or use sand paper to improve the chisel edge of the tip.	
SLUR 4 th SPACE G to HIGH G	If this slur doesn't work easily or is unfocused or requires too much embouchure to control upper pitch-adjust.	The rails just behind the tip area need to be blended/thinned-use a file or knife. Adjust overall taper of the rails-use a file.	
SLUR 2 OCTAVE F SCALE	Scale should be even in pitch and sound. If not-adjust.	The reed may have uneven, heavy areas and/or the rails may be too thin. Examine with a light. Blend with a knife or file.	
REED IS GENERALLY BRIGHT	Bright or raspy tone.	Rails may be too heavy. Back may be too heavy near the collar. Corners of the tip may be too heavy. Tip opening/Tip may be uneven-adjust with a file or knife. Wires are not snug-tighten.	
REED IS GENERALLY STUFFY	Muffled tone, Response issues. (Reed will probably fail crow test)	Generally too hard-thin. Reed may leak-check “Pop” Test. Reed may be too long-clip. Corners of tip are too thin-no adjustment possible.	

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WIRE ADJUSTMENTS SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE 1st ADJUSTMENT:

- 1st WIRE: Rounder = opens tip, harder/more resistant.
 Flatten=easier response/less resistant. More dampened tone/closes tip
- 2nd WIRE: Rounder=harder/more resistant. Raises pitch of crow. Closes tip.
 Flatter=opens tip. Less resistant/freer blowing. Lowers pitch of the crow.

VISUAL INSPECTION:

- A. The Shadow – Use a light to see thumbnail and gradual shading throughout.
- B. Thickness of the Tip-Look at the Tip Opening and examine the thickness of each blade.
- C. Blade Length – Measure with a ruler.
- D. Tip Opening-examine opening shape and how it closes.
- E. Profile/Side View-Look for an even blade taper.