

# Dave's Reeds Care Hotsheet

## General Use and Cleaning:

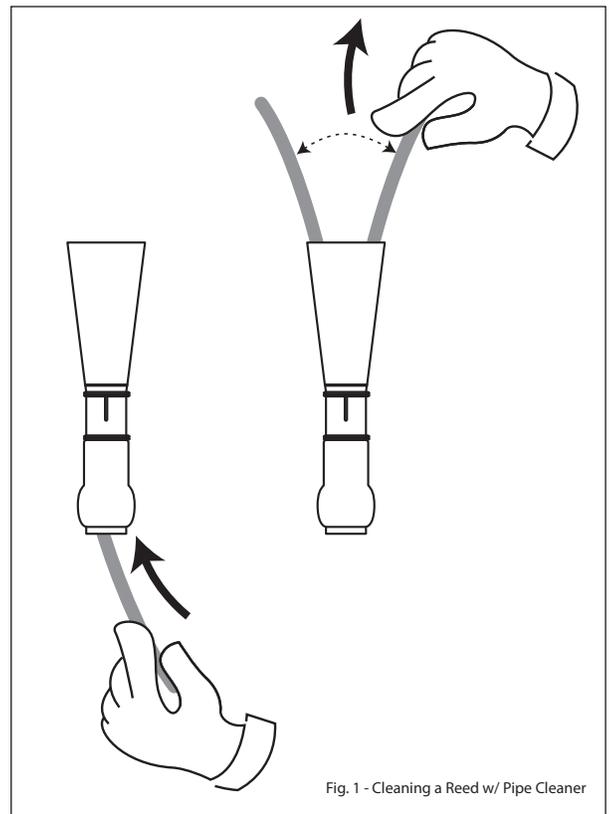
Reed should be soaked in water for a minimum of 2 minutes before use. Warm water will slightly shorten required soaking time.

Do not use anything else to soak the reed. (Diet Soda, Juice, etc.) Especially not anything with sugar in it, which will encourage bacterial growth.

Your saliva slowly digests the reed while you play. Rinse the reed with water after use to clean it. Hydrogen peroxide can be used to sterilize a reed if needed, but do so sparingly (it will also break down the cane.)

Clean the interior of the reed after every 3-4 uses by passing a pipe cleaner through the reed from butt end to tip. While pulling the pipe cleaner through the reed, move it carefully from side to side to clean the inside of the blade. (You don't have to do this as often if you brush your teeth before playing and avoid snacks during rehearsal breaks.)

Avoid leaving the reed on the bocal when not playing. (Your mouth is a safer spot, or your reed case.) Reeds left on a bocal while not playing have a tendency to meet a premature end at the hands of sweaters, glasses, music stands, and other passing musicians.



## Basic Reed Adjustments:

Problem: Reed too buzzy, can't play loud.

Solution: Open reed slightly by making the first wire rounder.

Problem: Reed too hard to blow.

Solution: Close reed slightly by making the first wire flatter.

Problem: Reed too bright, sharp, blatty.

Solution: Scrape or sand the "channel" area of the reed a little bit at a time. Not too much at once: sand a little, then test the reed.

Repeat until desired results are achieved.

Problem: Reed too dull, sounds muffled.

Solution: Sand the "heart" and tip areas of the reed. Not too much at once: sand a little, then test the reed. Repeat until desired results are achieved.

Problem: Reed flat.

Solution: Slightly flat reeds can be brought up in pitch by making the second wire rounder or the first wire flatter. Substantially flat reeds will need to have their blades clipped shorter.

Problem: Reed sharp.

Solution: Sand the entire reed, starting at the tip, and sanding the heart and spine if necessary. The sharper the reed, the further back you will have to sand. As always, to avoid taking off too much cane, sand/test/sand/test.

When scraping, sanding, or filing a reed, make sure you always use a plaque!

## More Information:

Many bassoon teachers have information on their websites about reed adjustments. A couple particularly good ones are:

- <http://www.steesbassoon.com/adjust.html>
- <http://www.canit.se/~chrisdav/reedadj.html>

There are also a number of reedmaking books available. Of particular importance are:

- The Bassoon Reed Manual: Lou Skinners Techniques, by J.R. McKay, R.Hinkle, & W. Woodward
- Bassoon Reed Making, by Mark Popkin and Loren Glickman

But these books are intended for more advanced players, who will probably also be making their own reeds.