



Adjustment Guide for Oboe

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Introduction

Oboes have many moving parts and because of this it will need to have minor adjustments made to it on a regular basis. As a budding oboist you will need to learn how to check the regulation of your oboe and determine if any adjustments need to be made. The following guide is designed to help you learn basic adjustments so you will be able to get your oboe working in an emergency situation. This guide is in no way a substitute for what a professional repair technician can and should do for you. Remember to have your oboe checked at least once a year by a repair technician even if you do not think anything is wrong!

To make the adjustments, screws only need to be turned ever so slightly since the smallest turn can make the difference between night and day. With experience you will learn and feel how much to turn the screws. To check the adjustments on your oboe you will need some type of feeler material. The most common material is cigarette paper. Cigarette paper is durable and readily available anywhere tobacco products are sold. Cigarette paper is also used by oboists to help remove excess moisture from tone holes. When purchasing cigarette paper try to find the un-gummed type, if you can't find un-gummed paper, buy the regular gummed paper and cut off the gummed strip. You do not want the gummy residue to get on your pads! Now if you are a Jr. High or High School student you might want to be careful with your cigarette papers at school. Many schools these days consider cigarette paper as drug paraphernalia, which could land you in some trouble. After you have your feeler material, you will need to cut off a long narrow piece and you will use it to check the adjustments by placing it under the pads and slowly pulling the material out to feel the tension of that pad.

You will repeat this procedure over and over as listed on the following pages to adjust your oboe. **Please keep in mind**, the following adjustment procedures will only work if all of your pads are level and covering the tone holes correctly.

Step One:

Assemble your instrument. Before you check any pads with feeler material you need to check the two bridge keys on each side of your oboe. There needs to be a tiny bit of space between where the top joint and lower joint bridge keys overlap. If there is not any space, you will not get a true reading from your feeler material. Also, it is possible your oboe would not even play without this space. If there is not any space and you have screw #12 on your oboe, turn it counter clockwise until you get the desired amount of space. If you do not have any space nor have screw #12, take your oboe to a repair technician ASAP.

Step Two:

Regulate the C key and the Bb keys together using Screw #1. These two keys, for all practical purposes, should have equal tension or pressure on the tone hole. With your oboe together press down the F# key, the C and Bb keys should open up. Place your feeler material underneath the C key, let go of the F# key and slowly pull the feeler material out from under the pad. While pulling the feeler material out, pay attention to how light or heavy the tension is on the feeler material. Repeat the same process for the Bb key. If the C key has more tension than the Bb, turn Screw #1 counter clockwise. If the C key has less tension than the Bb key turn screw #1 clockwise. Repeat this process until the C and Bb keys have equal pressure on the tone holes.

Step Three:

Regulate the A key and the C key together using screw #2. The A key should have a slightly heavier pressure than the C key. Press down the F# key, while holding the F# down close the A key checking its pressure. While still holding the F#, close the A key again but this time place the feeler material under the C key checking its pressure. If you do not feel any pressure on the C key turn Screw #2 clockwise. Keep repeating this procedure until the C key has slightly less pressure than the A Key.

Step Four:

Regulate the G key and the Bb key together using screw #3. The G key should have a slightly heavier pressure than the Bb key. This adjustment is the same process as in step three, but using the G and Bb keys instead. After you complete this step, you are for the most part done with the upper joint.

Step Five:

Regulate the E key and the F# resonance key together using screw #4. As with the previous two steps, the E key should have a slightly heavier pressure than the F# resonance key.

Step Six:

Regulate the D key and F# resonance key together using screw #5.

Step Seven:

Regulate the low C key and the E key together using screw #8. First check the low C pad with your feeler material to make sure it is closing with heavy pressure on the tone hole. If it is not closing all the way, loosen screws #8, #9 and #6 which should allow it to close all the way. After the low C is closing, check the E key pressure by pressing down on the low C key lever. If you do not feel any pressure on the E key, turn screw #8 clockwise. The low C key should have a slightly heavier pressure than the E key.

Step Eight:

Regulate the E key and the side forked F resonance key using screw #6. The E key should have a slightly heavier pressure than the side forked F resonance key. To check this adjustment, you need to hold the D key down which will open the side forked F resonance key. While holding the D key down check the side forked F resonance key pressure by closing the E key. Make the appropriate adjustment by turning screw #6.

The next few steps involve playing your oboe, so get your reed ready!

Step Nine:

Regulate the F# key and the G# keys together using screw #7. Start out by loosening the #7 screw by turning it counter clockwise. With reed in oboe, play a fifth line F natural, and at the same time wiggle the G# key lever. If you hear a change in pitch turn the #7 screw clockwise. Do this procedure just enough so the pitch does not change anymore. If you tighten the screw too much you will not be able to play in the lower octave at all.

Step Ten:

Regulate the low C key and the Eb keys together using screw #9. This one may be a little confusing the way I do it, but I feel you get the best results this way... so hang in there! Start out by loosening screw #9 if you haven't already. While playing a low C# wiggle your left hand Eb lever. If you hear the pitch change turn screw #9 clockwise. Do the same thing over again until there is no change in pitch.

Step Eleven:

Regulate the low B key and the C# keys together using screw #10. (Note: if you have a basic student line oboe, you will not have screw #10 on your oboe.) Start by loosening the #10 screw. Play a low C# and then slowly press down on your low B lever. If the low B does not speak, turn #10 clockwise. Repeat this procedure until the low B speaks by playing a low C# first.

Step Twelve:

Regulate the low B key and the low Bb keys together using screw #11. (Note: if you have a basic student oboe, you will not have this screw.) There are many factors that go into adjusting the low B and low Bb together, so if this doesn't work... don't despair! Try to play your low Bb. If the note comes out, you don't need to do anything. If the note does not come out turn the #11 screw clockwise, then try playing the Bb again. If it plays, you did it, if not try again, but it is possible you will need to see a repair tech for this one.

Step Thirteen:

Regulate the height of your half hole using screw #13. (Note: basic oboes will not have this screw.) In general, this pad should be very close to the tone hole. To check it, play a high C#, and if it is flat or closed and "stuffy sounding" turn the screw counter clockwise to open the height some. If the high C# is sharp turn the screw clockwise to close the height.

Step Fourteen:

Stop turning all of the screws on your oboe, go practice and make great music! If you have any further questions do not hesitate to call or email!

