

THE OBOE REEDMAKER'S QUICK FIX READINESS GUIDE

Fix your most frustrating reed problems – with insights from 35+ years of professional oboe playing and teaching.

By Joe Shalita



If you've ever sat at the reed desk wondering what went wrong — you're not alone. I've been there too, many times. That's why I put together this quick guide. Inside, you'll find simple fixes for the most common reed problems, plus a checklist to make sure you're set up for success before you even start scraping. These are the same insights I've shared with students and colleagues over the years — and now they're yours.



SECTION 1: Reedmaker's Quick Fixes

Fast solutions to common reed problems

Step one

This is the most important part!!!

Evaluation

The reed must have 3 main characteristics

It must respond properly in all registers. Low notes to High notes in a soft attack.

Try playing a low G with the least amount of air as possible. Start blowing air through increasing slowly. Do not use the tongue. The note should start like you are cutting butter with a hot knife. If the note does not start smoothly, thin the sides of the tip and the top corners very lightly with no pressure on the knife.

It must be up to pitch.

Playing on a flat reed is instant death and will affect everything from your sound, intonation and even finger technique in a negative way. Crow the reed in a playing position on the lips. If it does not crow a C , Clip it till it does and then retaper the tip if needed.

It must be stable.

Play a C and without changing your lips, slur up to a high C. The octave should just pop out. If it doesn't, make sure the opening is not too large in the throat of the reed. Separate the tip from the heart on the back corners where the tip meets the heart.

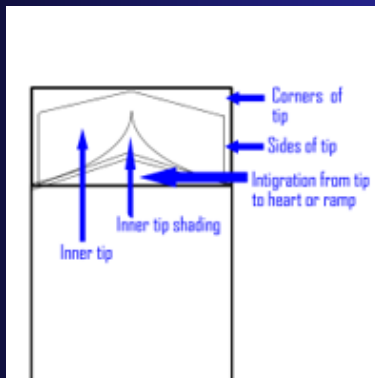
All of these things must be in the reed. If one is missing, the other two will be affected. Before you adjust anything, make sure the opening is good. If the reed is functioning properly, then the sound will be decent as a result.

Section 2: Things to Check

Some of the things that I check for in a reed are both visual and most importantly, how does it feel

Check for things like symmetry first. Make sure things are even. Remember that the reed vibrates from top to bottom and side to side. The balance of the two is the secret.

Thin the sides of the tip as well as the corners of the tip first. That is where the vibrations start. Make sure the heart and tip vibrate together, then you can scrape out of the back for a more resonant tone.



Another thing to check before anything is how the opening is. Make sure that it is not only a comfortable opening at the tip, but also at the bottom of the reed above the thread.

Many times the reed looks fine at the tip but still feels like you have to bite on it to control it.

Also remember that scraping more on the sides of the reed will have the effect of control and scraping more in the center just to the right and left of the spine will make it vibrate more.

The pitch of the crow and quality of the crow is so important. Crow the reed in playing position. If the note is almost a "C" but not quite, clip it because it is flat. To me there is no such thing as a flat "C". It doesn't exist. It is a sharp "B".

Do not play on flat reeds.

If the crow has many pitches, clip it till you have 2 octave "C's" and then thin the tip and re-taper it.

Section 3: Mindset Prep

Reedmaking is not about perfection — it's about observation. For me, I am only concerned with things like symmetry up to a point. Don't try to copy someone's reed by how it looks.

Focus on how the reed feels, sounds, and responds — not just how it looks. I go for a certain feel in the reed. I want a reed that I don't have to work very hard to play. It must feel comfortable both in hardness and resistance. Those two things are very different from each other.

Keep a reed journal. Notes will save you months of frustration.

SECTION 4: Ready to Go Deeper?

If this guide gave you some lightbulb moments, just imagine what 56+ in-depth video lessons, visual demos, and step-by-step instruction can do for your reedmaking.

- ✓ Learn the American-style long scrape
- ✓ Improve consistency and confidence
- ✓ Get lifetime access to real-world, visual reedmaking help

 [Click here to preview the full course](#)

See you inside,
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