

Some Random Notes

- Most players ornament a note from above
- Most whistle problems are directly related to air pressure or improper positioning of the fingers.
 - Grip matters. Some players play with their fingers relatively flat on the whistle. Others play more on the tips of their fingers. Low whistles require a flat finger style called “the pipers grip”. Players who arch their fingers and play with the tips of their fingers have an advantage in performing some ornaments. That’s because their fingers are formed in an arch and that builds in a bit of spring-like action. Flat-fingered players have to work harder to get the same quickness. Excellent players using either style can be found. Work with what is comfortable for you.
- It isn’t always about ornamentation. Phrasing is THE critical element. Ornaments support phrasing. Too many ornaments can spoil a tune.
- Why when playing cuts do we limit the cutting finger to T1 and B1? It’s because most whistles will speak reliably when those fingers are lifted. Lifting the finger directly above the target note may cause a strange sound! But using T1 and B1 on most whistles prevents the squawking that other tones might cause.
- ALWAYS breathe from the belly. Do not breathe from the chest. Control air flow with the diaphragm. Fill you lungs with air. Don’t be timid about drawing in a large volume of air.
- Periodically clean your whistle. Warm water is best. Do not use any abrasive cleaning products. I suggest you do not use soap. Use folded newspaper to clean the fipple. Use nothing that might be rough and harm the fipple.
- Whistle players and graham crackers don’t mix well. But stay away from dairy products too. They cause an increase in mucous production and that can result in a messy airway in the whistle.
- Before starting to play, warm the whistle. Put your finger over the fipple and just blow a few times into the tube.
- When buying a whistle, give consideration to getting a TUNABLE whistle. This is very important if you are going to play with other musicians. Whistles tune by moving the head joint in to increase the pitch or out to decrease the pitch. Inexpensive whistles generally do not tune.
- The bore of a whistle is important. Small bore instruments are quieter than large bore instruments. Conical bore instruments have better intonation than straight bore instruments.