



# Articulation Tips

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Flute

## Finger Breath Exercise (Keith Underwood)

- Wedge the first knuckle of your dominant hand between your lips
- Keith says to pretend like you're saying "HO" backwards; it should sound like paper ripping
- The most important thing is to take the air in slowly and steadily*
- After you take a finger breath, use that breath to play on your flute
- Slow and steady on the inhale, steady on the exhale; try not to surge with your air!

## Articulation and the Finger Breath

- Once you get the hang of the finger breath, try articulating one!
- Start with **single tonguing**:
  - Use a forward syllable that feels comfortable to you, like "duh" or "tuh"
  - While the air is coming in, gently interrupt it with your tonguing syllable
  - Think about articulated notes as a single stream of air just being interrupted by the tongue, like a running faucet being interrupted with a finger.
  - Many students will be tempted to send the air out in puffs, like the faucet being turned on and off, on and off—this is not helpful!!
- When single tonguing becomes more comfortable, try **double tonguing**!
  - You will need another syllable to alternate with your "duh" that falls further back on your tongue, like "guh" or "kuh"
  - Practice the back syllable by itself, as you did with "duh"
  - Alternate between the finger breath and playing on the flute
  - When you feel stable, begin alternating both syllables
  - My favorite double-tonguing syllables are "chu-guh"
- Keep your articulated notes as legato as possible
  - You want as much time as possible for the note to be filled with tone
  - If too much of the time is taken by your attack, then when you try to go faster, you will probably find you hear more tongue/attack than note. This also leads to the tongue feeling inflexible and "jammed up."
  - Even if your notes are marked staccato, they will sound it when you go faster.

## Breathing Bag

- Breathing bags can be used much the same as finger breaths
- Take the first breath from the room
- Blow it into the bag, then breathe in and out exclusively from the bag
- Practice your tonguing/articulation or play your articulated phrases into your bag
- Inhale from the bag, then play with that breath on your flute
- Remember that the faster we go, the harder we blow! Flutists are very prone to overblowing fast, articulated passages. Every time you increase your tempo, check how much air you are blowing.

## [ChristineDavisFlute.com](http://ChristineDavisFlute.com)

- Check out my website for more information and other media!
- Also, be sure to check out my book:

[The No-Nonsense Guide to Becoming a Professional Flutist](#), available on Amazon.com