



Reeding Between the Lines:

10 RULES OF THE ROAD FOR GETTING THE MOST
OUT OF YOUR HANDMADE OBOE REEDS

X Give a Reed a Home

Although reeds are shipped in small plastic tubes, they should not live in them forever. Upon receiving your reeds, PLEASE transplant them to a real reed case. This will help extend the life of your reeds and prevent unnecessary damage.

X It's Not Always a Perfect Fit

Reeds are not an exact science. Sometimes reeds fit tightly in the oboe and sometimes they fit loosely. Either way, it's OK. If things are tight, just use a little cork grease. Too loose? Try wrapping a little bit of cigarette paper around the bottom of the reed.

X Reeds Breathe Air Too

Reeds at MKL Reeds don't need very much soaking to play their best. The reeds are scraped well and too much water will actually clog the fibers of the reed, sort of "drowning" it. You will get the best stability, pitch, response and overall tone from your reed if you don't "soak" AT ALL. We suggest a quick dip in water and then allowing the reed to sit outside of the water for a minute or two. Then, blow out the excess water, pop it in your oboe, and you'll be ready with a great reed.

X Show Your Pearly Whites

Brush your teeth before you play. It's good basic hygiene and it's good for oboe reeds. After all, your oboe reed doesn't care to see what you had for dinner anymore than the next guy. Brush your teeth and spare your reed. Enough said.

X Reeds are Weather Nuts

When it comes to the weather, oboe reeds can get pretty moody. Too cold and the reed snaps shut like a Venus Flytrap. Too much humidity and it feels like a ten ton gorilla. The moral of this story: be prepared for change. Your reed's personality can vary by the day.

X All Reeds Go to Heaven

While thoughts of the “eternal reed” fill the dreams of oboe players everywhere, we are pretty sure it doesn't exist. Reeds are wood. Wood degrades. Reeds die. It's just a fact of life. Playing a reed that is past its prime can be painful... for everyone. Expect reeds to last for anywhere between 7-12 hours of playing time.

X Remember Murphy's Law...

Well, Murphy has a lot of laws, but we're talking about this one: *Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.* Reeds break, chip, split and crack. It is just the nature of things, so ALWAYS have a backup. And most of the time, you would be wise to have a backup for the backup.

X There are Many Flavors

Every oboe player is different, and so it is with reeds. No two reeds are exactly alike, and that is good. While many oboe players would like to order 50 reeds “just like that last one,” it just isn't meant to be. Enjoy the fact that every reed is different. Learn about what makes this reed different than that one. You will be a happier (and better) player for it.

X These are NOT Store Bought Reeds

Let us repeat, “These are NOT store bought reeds.” Handmade reeds have a personality. They have likes and dislikes, good days and bad days. Playing a reed like this will make you a better oboe player, not to mention a better *sounding* player as well. So while this reed might not look exactly like the last one, or the next one, you will benefit from learning to manage these differences.

X Please Enjoy

We try not to get too serious about all of this reed stuff. After all, this should be fun right? At the end of the day, we are just talking about pieces of wood and some thread. Definitely nothing you should be losing sleep over. So, go ahead, enjoy.