

High Spirits

NATIVE FLUTES

Welcome to musical adventures with your Native Flute! In my experience it is a very magical instrument that appears in one's life at just the right moment. I hope it will bring as much pleasure into your life as it has mine.

We all need creative expression in our lives – a way to connect to people, nature, and spirit. Music fulfills these needs. It's a wonderful way to communicate feelings that often don't have another outlet. Traditional western instruments (guitar, piano, etc.) have a lot of technique to get past before one can feel free to simply create music. But the Native Flute is different. It is low-tech and simple to learn. That's what makes it unique. Without any musical experience anyone can create soulful expressive melodies.

As you play your flute, keep in mind that the breath is your life force, a physical expression of your experiences and feelings. When you play you directly project yourself through this wonderful piece of wood, bringing it to life and bringing your life to the world. That is what the ancient ones had in mind when they created this instrument.

Play lots, let yourself go, be creative, and most importantly, have fun. If you wish to share your Native Flute experiences, please contact us - we would love to hear from you.

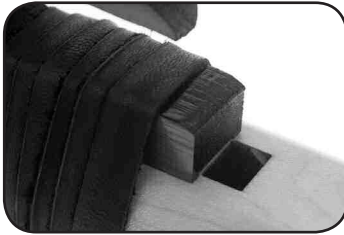
Safe Journey,

Odell Borg and the High Spirits team

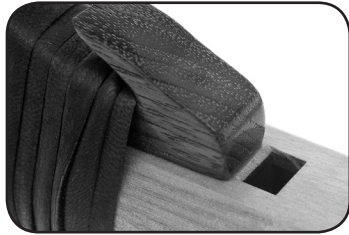
Fetish Placement

Before you start playing, it is important that the fetish is positioned correctly so the flute achieves its optimal sound.

Although the flute fetish is firmly tied down, it is not permanently glued so that it can be removed for cleaning and adjusted for the best voice. The photos below show the correct fetish position.



Optimal position if your flute does not have a chamfer cut.



Optimal position if your flute has a chamfer cut.

What is a Chamfer Cut?

The chamfer is a 45° beveled cut along the edge of the sound hole.

Traditional Flutes

Every flute has its own personality and we employ different techniques to achieve each flute's best voice. One such technique is cutting a chamfer on the sound hole as seen above. Some traditional flutes will have this chamfer cut and some will not.

Signature Flutes

The chamfer cut is an integral part of the mechanics of signature flutes. Therefore, all signature flutes will have a chamfer cut on the sound hole.



High Spirits Flutes

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IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

Leather Tie in the Center of the Flute

If your flute looks like a 5-hole flute and has a piece of leather wrapped around the center of it, it's actually a 6-hole flute with the leather covering one of the holes. The differences between 5 and 6-hole flutes are covered further in the "5-Hole and 6-Hole Flutes" section of this booklet (see page 6). For now you can leave the tie on and continue to play it as a 5-hole flute or, if comfortable, simply remove the leather to play a 6-hole flute. This makes a flute very versatile and eliminates any confusion over which flute is best for you.

Guarantee

We stand behind our instruments completely. If the sound is affected by any structural defect because of checking or natural cracks, we will replace the flute within the first 30 days and repair the instrument thereafter. In case of accidental damage beyond these conditions, we will make every effort to repair it at a reasonable rate (plus shipping).

We rarely see issues but we want you to understand the nature of wood. As we blow into a flute moisture from our breath will cause the wood to expand and contract and natural check lines can occur. These lines look like splits or cracks but rarely go all the way through the flute. To help prevent check lines from forming we seal and treat every instrument with hardening oils.

In the rare event that a check line does occur on your flute we recommend that you get in touch with us so we can help you. It is important to note that no matter what changes a wooden flute may go through, if it retains its voice, it is an indicator that the structural integrity is solid.

Introduction

Flutes are one of the most ancient instruments and are found throughout the world. For generations upon generations they have been closely tied to our traditions, rituals and celebrations. That is why so many of us are hypnotically drawn to the haunting melodies they produce - their essence runs deep in our veins.

The origin of the Native American flute lies within the cultures of the ancient people, those that came before the tribes and nations we are familiar with today. Their legacy produced a variety of flutes, each of which is associated with different nations and tribes. We believe that the flute you have chosen is one of the most fascinating and technically marvelous instruments to emerge from this history. Its ingenious design produces a sound that far surpasses its simplicity.

The Native Americans, like most tribal cultures, did not have a written music language. They did not find it necessary. Their songs and playing techniques were passed down from generation to generation in disciplined rituals and practice. Individual styles were developed by experimentation and imitation of sounds heard in nature. Since they did not have sheet music and notes to follow, the music they created came spontaneously “from the heart”. This improvisational style is ideal for unstructured self-expression, yet the Native Flute also easily adapts to the structure of modern written music.

Each of us is linked to a past in which nature was the dominant force of life and music expressed our individual and collective experiences. Creating music deepened our connection with community and the natural world around us. For many of us that connection is now weak and at some level we all feel its loss. Today, few things inspire those feelings of connection as strongly as music does.

Much of what you will learn about this instrument comes from within you. Music flows through all of us. Listen thoughtfully, be patient with yourself, and, most importantly, have fun!

Kokopelli

Kokopelli, the flute playing wanderer, was a gentle, minor god to the pre-Columbian Indians of the western United States. The Kokopelli figure has been found in the ruins of the Pit House People dating back as early as 200 A.D. and as late as the 16th century where it appears in association with drawings of men on horseback, armored men, and men in cowls. Kokopelli has many modalities: he is a personality, an individual, the personification of a legend, a beneficent god to some and a confounded nuisance to others.

Kokopelli was responsible for fulfilling many needs for his people, including rain, abundant food, music, merriment and dance. Kokopelli's likeness varies almost as much as the legends about him, but on the whole, he is unmistakable - dancing and always playing some type of flute.

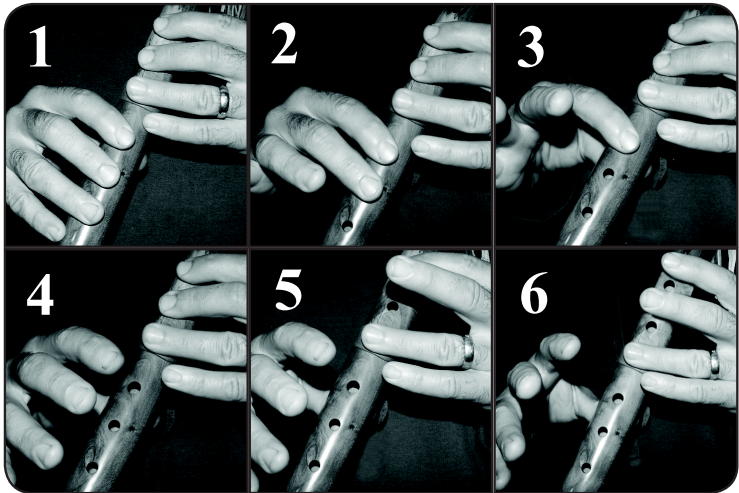
How to Play

The most challenging aspect of playing this flute is to close all of the holes completely. If you can do that you can learn to play this instrument. Use your little fingers and thumbs to stabilize the flute and the pads of your other fingers (not the tips) to completely cover the holes (the larger surface area of the pads makes this easier). With all the holes closed, blow lightly into the flute. If the sound is weak blow a little harder.

The sound you are listening for is a solid, deep, even tone that is pleasant to the ear. If you get anything else, it's because one of the holes is still slightly open or you are blowing too hard or possibly too softly. Just the slightest opening left by one of your fingers will result in a buzzy or off-sounding note.

If the bottom note sounds too high in pitch it's likely that one of the upper two finger holes is slightly open. Adjust your fingers, making sure you are using the pads of your fingers, and try again until you achieve a deep bottom note with all the holes closed. A helpful tip here is to adjust your fingers instead of adding more finger pressure - too much pressure will only cramp your fingers. Hold off on playing the other fingerings until you achieve that bottom note because once you can play that note the others are a breeze.

Once you're comfortable playing the low note the next skill is to play up and down the scale. For those who have never played a wind instrument, we recommend that you do this in front of a mirror. Lift one finger at a time from the bottom up until all the holes are open and then close one finger at a time from the top down.



Please, do this slowly! Pause at each note to listen to its sound. If it sounds solid, go on to the next note. If not, lift your finger and replace it correctly (pad of the finger covering the hole completely). This will instill good muscle memory. After successfully playing the scale a couple of times, try doing it with your eyes closed. This forces you to develop your tactile skills. Another advantage to playing with your eyes closed is that the notes will envelop you, creating a deeper understanding of how they interact.

Important Tips

Close the Holes Completely

Any hole that is closed must be completely covered or you will get a squeaky sound. You will know it when you hear it.

Play Slowly

Take your time with each note. It will help you develop good habits. Your fingering speed will come by itself.

Close Your Eyes

This develops your tactile skills and your muscle memory, helping coordination develop more quickly.

Breathe

Breathe at normal intervals; do not wait until you gasp for air. Your breath capacity will develop naturally.

Experiment

To learn the tonal range of each note, first, blow softly and then increase your breath until the note breaks.

Tone

Each note has a sweet spot. If a note is shrill or breathy, decrease the air flow. If it is wispy or weak increase the air flow to liven it up. Finding the sweet spot on the bottom note (all holes covered) can be challenging. It's more delicate than the other notes and if you blow too hard it will go to the next octave, producing a high-pitched sound.

Play the Scale

Play the scale from the bottom up and then go back down. Slightly increase the air flow as you play up the scale and decrease it on your way back down.

Creating Songs

The Native Americans, like many tribal cultures, never had a written music language; they did not find it necessary. In turn they developed instruments that were naturally expressive and easy to play. The flute was one of the more complex instruments they developed. It is set up in such a way that the notes are in harmony with each other. In western music it is called the pentatonic scale. Penta, meaning five, represents the five notes on the flute. For those of you that have a 6-hole flute, be sure to read the section on “5-hole and 6-hole flutes”. Because all notes complement each other this flute is very easy to play and you cannot go too far wrong as you start to play and experiment.

By now you have been playing the scale up and down and are more than likely comfortable with it. That’s great! This means you’ve established the correct finger technique and muscle memory. Now it’s time to add some variation. Continue to play up and down the scale, but this time hold some notes longer and some shorter. Try repeating some notes, going back and forth between two or three. When you pause to take a breath, change your fingering so you restart on a different note than you finished on. Listen to the way the notes interact and to the rhythms you create; when you hear a combination you like repeat it a few times.

These improvisational techniques will develop your understanding of how different notes interact to create melodies and the more feeling you put into it, the richer your melodies will be. Remember, the important thing is that it sounds good to you; this is for your own pleasure and entertainment. No pressure - just fun!

When you first begin creating music on your flute try to let go of any structured ideas you may have. It’s not necessary to know any music theory or to read music to create songs on this flute. If you feel you need more structure try using the verse-chorus form. In this form, you play something, repeat it once or twice, play something different, and then go back and play the first part again. No matter what method you use, keep it simple. Beautiful songs don’t need to be complex and before you know it your style will develop and diverse melodies will flow naturally.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to create music. If it's pleasing to you that's all that matters. Be creative, have fun, and play and practice when you feel like it. Playing your flute is not a chore that must be done; it's a joy to be celebrated!

5-Hole and 6-Hole Flutes

It is important to note that none of the information in this section is necessary to play the flute. It only becomes necessary if you want to play other scales or plan to play written music.

All Native American flutes are based on the five note pentatonic scale ("penta" meaning five). These five notes are harmonic to each other. That is why 5-hole flutes are so easy to play and require no musical background. However, other scales can also be played on the Native Flute. For example, both the diatonic and chromatic scales can be played on the Native Flute.

We mentioned earlier that the Native Flute has five basic notes which create the pentatonic scale. When the sixth hole is introduced it also allows other scales to be more easily played by making the fingerings for these other scales less complex. However, playing the sixth hole can create a dissonant sound if it's not used properly. This is why we recommend that beginning players start with the basic five note pentatonic scale. After playing for a while your ear will become more developed and through experimentation this extra note can be included more easily.

Techniques

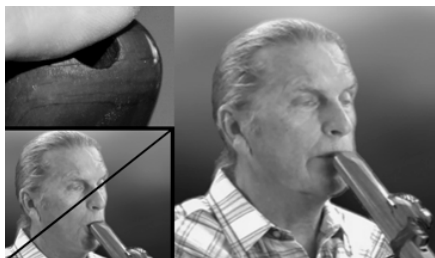
When you are trying new techniques on the flute, stick to using the top two or three notes. The two bottom notes tend to be more delicate, making initial experimentation challenging. Once you feel comfortable with the way they play/sound on the top notes, apply your new techniques on the bottom notes too.

Embouchure

The mouth position used to play an instrument is called an embouchure. When first playing a Native Flute, the natural tendency is to place the

whole mouth end of the flute into one's mouth and blow. This technique has a few downsides: it creates excess moisture in the flute, hinders breath and tonguing techniques, and reduces the ability to control the airflow.

Instead, close your lips then place the flute against them. Allow your upper lip to close about half of the air hole and place the lower lip just slightly underneath the air hole.



In this way the air passage from the mouth is reduced and backpressure is created. This technique provides a better sound, less moisture buildup, and more control of the flute.

Breath

In the beginning playing the flute is all about fingering. Those techniques will solidify fairly quickly. Once you feel comfortable with your fingering, the flute becomes all about your breath. Think of it like singing with your breath. When we sing we try to be melodic by using inflections in our voice, otherwise we sound monotone. The same holds true when playing the flute. If you just blow a continuous stream of air, it's somewhat monotonous, but if you vary your breath pressure to create inflections it brings color and feeling to the notes.

Without the flute in your mouth, try creating a short melody with your breath by varying breath pressure (like whistling without sound). Now, using just a couple of notes, do the same thing into the flute. Applying this technique while playing the scale or any simple melody will bring your playing to life.

Any way that you devise to change the airflow from your mouth will change the sound on the flute. Try moving your tongue rapidly

in front of the mouthpiece, or try trilling or snapping your tongue. Altering the airflow in any way will produce unique effects. We all have different abilities and styles, so be creative.

Tonguing

Tonguing is a technique used to create rhythm by stopping and starting the air flow to the flute. To perform this technique, the tongue quickly touches the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth, like making the sound “ta”. Without the flute say “ta”. Notice where your tongue touches the roof of your mouth. Now say, “ta, ta, ta, ta”, now “ta_,ta_,ta_,ta,ta,ta,ta_,ta_,ta.”

Repeating the second or third line over and over creates a rhythm. On your flute, try this on a single note first, and then try changing notes at the point when the breath stops (at each “ta”). Tonguing can be very fast and deliberate or slow and subtle as well as all ranges in between. Using different tonguing styles will bring feeling and life to your melodies.

Fingering

Fingering affects the sound of the flute as well. Slipping your finger slowly off a hole will change the note with a sliding effect. Rolling a finger partly off a hole and then re-covering it will produce a moody or blues quality. Covering a hole only half way produces a different note. Experiment and develop your own unique style and techniques.

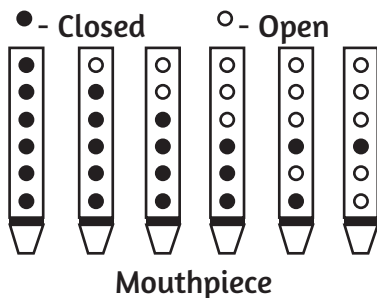
Jumping Notes

Up to this point the melodies you have been playing are composed by moving from one note to the note just above or below it. Now it’s time to jump notes. Jumping notes allows you to jump from one note to any other note within a scale.

To do this you’ll need to follow one simple rule: *when you open or close any hole on your flute, all the holes below that hole have to be open and all the holes above it need to be closed.* The only exception to this rule is that the third finger hole down from the mouthpiece must stay closed at all times (this applies to 6-hole flutes only).

When following this rule, any note you play will be harmonious with the next one. A good way to see this rule visually is with the following

fingering chart. This chart shows the fingering pattern of each note in the basic 5 note pentatonic scale. Notice that each note follows this rule, everything above is closed, everything below is open (third hole from the mouthpiece is always closed).



Experimenting with different fingering and breath techniques is fun and rewarding. If you feel you are getting bored with your playing or feel like you have reached a plateau, take it as a positive sign that you have mastered your present techniques. At this point it's time to get experimental. Put what you know aside, make strange sounds, move your fingers turtle slow or rabbit fast, mimic bird songs or the wind in the trees. These types of experimentation will enhance your style and push you beyond your plateau. We have had the pleasure of playing flute with many people and are always amazed that no two sound the same; everyone has his or her own individual style.

Moisture Buildup in the Flute

When blowing into the flute, condensation from the breath will build up in the air chamber and, over time, will clog the air passage so that the air will not be able to flow easily. Until the tongue and mouth become used to the mouthpiece moisture buildup can be frequent. The buildup normally occurs after playing for a while. One solution is to place a finger partially over the sound hole (see fig.1, page 11) and blow hard into the flute. The moisture will come out from the front of the fetish as a drop or spray of water. Then hold the flute by the bottom end (opposite of mouthpiece)

and shake the moisture out of the breath chamber. Another option is to take the fetish off, let it dry out, and then tie it back on (see page 12). Creating an embouchure when playing the flute will also help in reducing the moisture buildup (see Embouchure section - page 6). Additional information about embouchures can be found at www.highspirits.com.

Larger and Longer Flutes

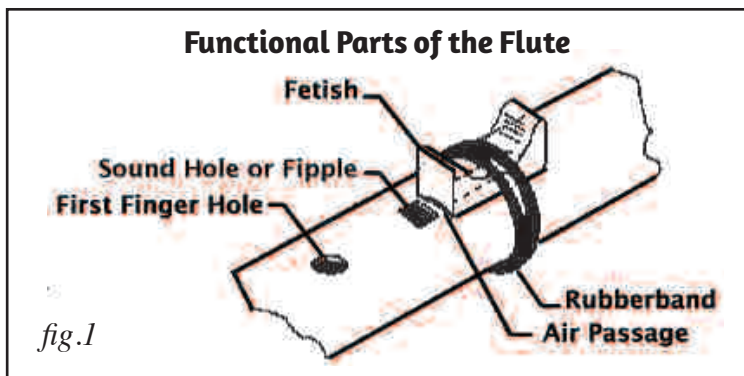
Most of us start off with a shorter flute because they are easier to play, are a smaller investment, and we want to see if we connect with the instrument. But everyone loves the sound of the deeper tones. If you decide to purchase or have purchased a deeper toned Native Flute, then you will be playing a larger instrument. On larger flutes the breath control and style of play is more subtle and sensitive, so going from a smaller to larger flute can take some adjustment. However, this is easily compensated for by the mellow, warm, expressive feel that the deeper tones create. For more information on playing larger flutes go to www.highspirits.com.

Double and Triple Flutes

There are two types of double flutes being made - double barrel shotgun style and split “V” style. We make the “V” style double flute with two separate breath holes; one for the melody flute and one for the drone flute. This allows the flute to instantly be played as a single or double flute, adding versatility and richness to your melodies. Double flutes do take a different style of play and we suggest experimenting to create your own unique sound. Here are a few tips:

- Depending on what part of the flute you wish to emphasize (melody side or drone side), move the flute slightly in that direction so that side receives more air.
- When playing both sides try tonguing the higher notes (see section on Techniques) and adding a bit more breath pressure. This will drive the drone to the high octave.

It does take a bit more air to play these flutes. Using an embouchure will help in regulating the airflow (see Embouchure section - page 6).



The triple flute is unique in that it has two drones and a melody flute. One drone plays “A” minor while the other drone has three holes that can be opened or closed to create different drone notes. The center flute has six holes on which the melody is played. Triple flutes are wonderful performance instruments, but we only recommend them for experienced players.

Care of the Flute

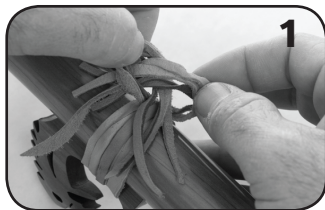
After we make the flutes we treat them with several coats of nontoxic oil that hardens the wood. This does not have to be done again unless the instrument is heavily used. If the flute starts to lose its luster we recommend that a nontoxic oil be used to bring back the finish. There are commercial products available such as wooden salad bowl oils or any other refined, *food grade* oil that you like the taste of. At the time of oiling apply a coat of oil inside the bore. After letting the oil sit for ten minutes or so, wipe off the outside of the flute but let the oil inside the bore soak in (*do not wipe it off*).

To get the best possible sound from the flute it is important that the fetish (piece tied on top of the flute) be tied down tight. Leather has a tendency to stretch so the fetish has to be re-tied periodically. We secure the fetish with a rubber band first and then wrap the leather around it. After tying the fetish down tight, you will still be able to adjust it.

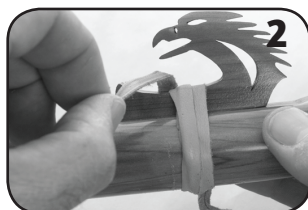
The ideal position for the fetish is just in back of and centered on the sound hole (see fig. 1, page 11 and image 4 page 12). The sound hole

should not be covered by any part of the fetish. The fetish can be moved back and forth to get a slight difference in pitch but we have found that the *sweet spot* is in the position described above.

How to Remove and Replace the Fetish:



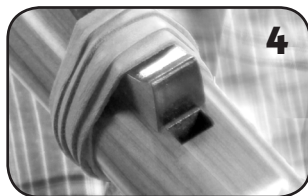
1. Undo the square knot.



2. Unwrap leather.



3. Remove rubber band and fetish.



4. Correct fetish position.

What if? solutions!

Cannot get any sound:

- Make sure the fetish is in the proper position and tied down tightly (see fig.1, page 11) .
- Check that the fetish is not covering any part of the sound hole and that the fetish is centered behind the sound hole (see fig.1, page 11).

The sound is weak or buzzy:

- If it has been played a lot, check for moisture buildup.
- Check to see if the fetish is in the proper place and is tied down tightly (see fig.1, page 11) .

The low (bottom) note breaks to a high note or is squeaky:

- Make sure that all the fingering holes are *completely* closed. Play flat-fingered using more of the fleshy pads of your fingers.
- Use less air pressure when you play the note. If you blow too hard on that bottom note it will break to the next octave.

The flute sounds off-key or makes unpleasant sounds:

- a) Make sure all of the fingering holes are *completely* closed. Play flat-fingered using more of the fleshy part of your fingers.
- b) Increase or decrease the breath to make the note sharper or flatter, respectively.

For additional information be sure to visit our FAQ page at www.highspirits.com.

Songs

The tribal cultures that created these types of instruments did not have written music. The basics were handed down and the rest came from the heart. We honor that. This beautiful instrument is an improvisational gift through which we have the ability to express our heart's song. We encourage you to experiment by creating your own songs and expressions. You will find the process very liberating, easy, and rewarding.

That said, songbooks can be a fun and motivating way to learn and play the Native Flute. If you are interested in learning songs we have a variety of songbooks available on our website www.highspirits.com.

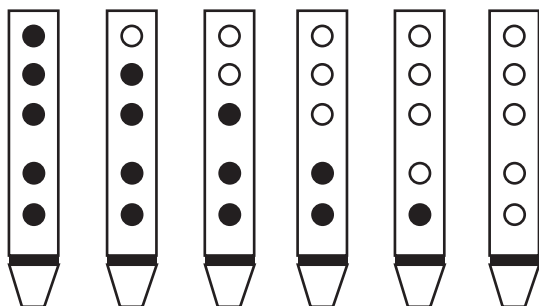
Fingering Charts

The following pages contain fingering charts for 5 and 6-hole flutes in the minor keys of “A”, “Bb”, “B”, “C”, “D”, “E”, “F#” and “G”. On the charts, the black dots indicate closed holes and the tapered end of the drawing indicates the mouthpiece. Under each fingering diagram is the corresponding note.

Please remember that with all wind instruments the amount of air pressure exerted will determine the accuracy of the note. More pressure will sharpen the note, while less pressure will flatten it.

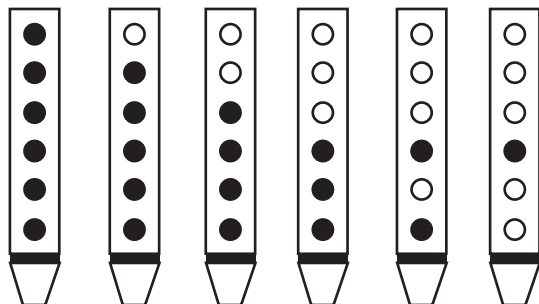
We provide fingering charts because many people are interested in the information they provide but you don't need them to enjoy playing music on the Native Flute. In many cultures people never learn music theory. They create beautiful melodies simply “playing by ear”.

5-Hole Flute Fingering for Pentatonic Minor Scales



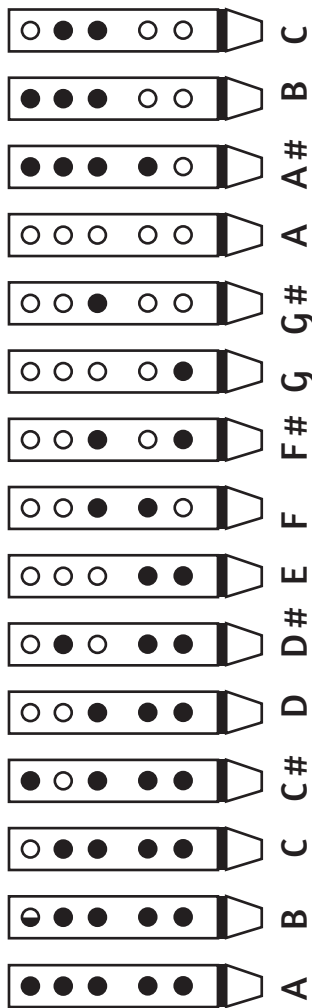
Key of "A"	A	C	D	E	G	A
Key of "Bb" ("A#") Bb	C#	D#	F	G#	Bb	Bb
Key of "B"	B	D	E	F#	A	B
Key of "C"	C	D#	F	G	A#	C
Key of "D"	D	F	G	A	C	D
Key of "E"	E	G	A	B	D	E
Key of "F#"	F#	A	B	C#	E	F#
Key of "G"	G	A#	C	D	F	G

6-Hole Flute Fingering for Pentatonic Minor Scales

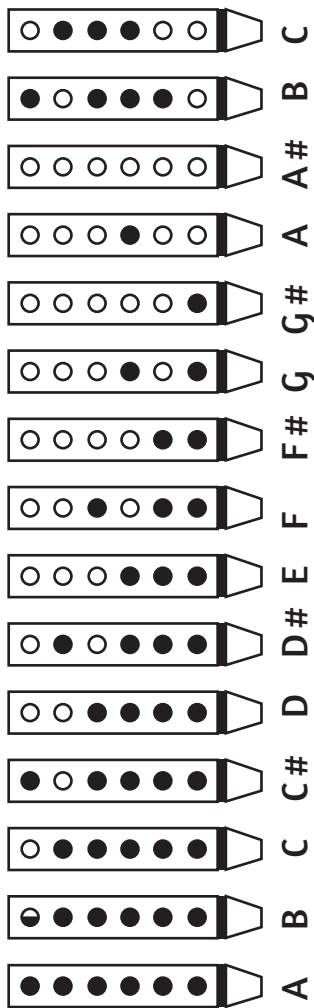


Key of "A"	A	C	D	E	G	A
Key of "Bb" ("A#")	Bb	C#	D#	F	G#	Bb
Key of "B"	B	D	E	F#	A	B
Key of "C"	C	D#	F	G	A#	C
Key of "D"	D	F	G	A	C	D
Key of "E"	E	G	A	B	D	E
Key of "F#"	F#	A	B	C#	E	F#
Key of "G"	G	A#	C	D	F	G

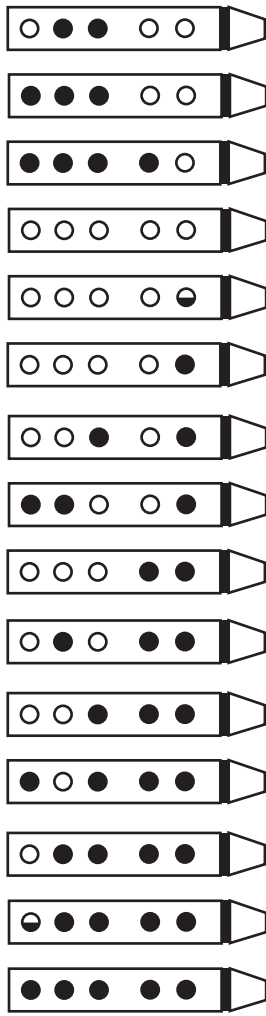
“A” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



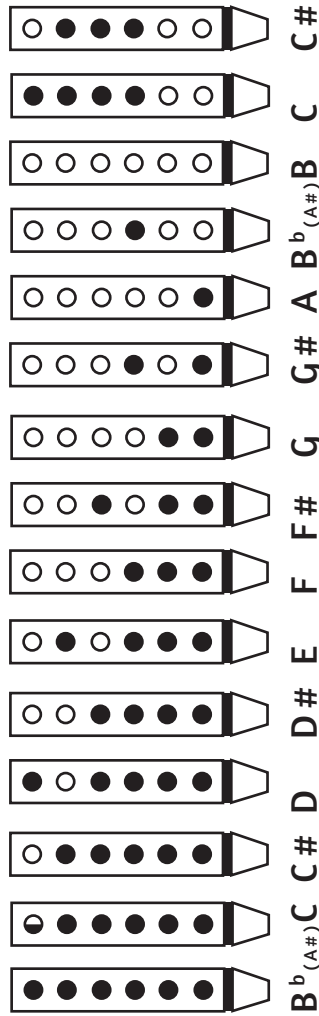
“A” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



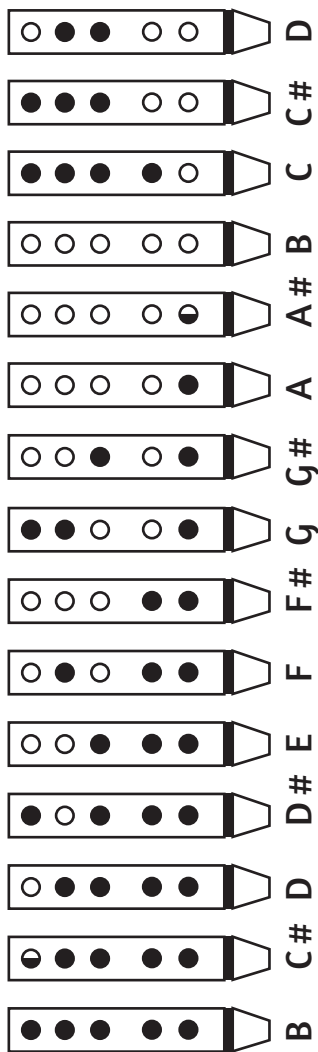
“B^b” (“A#”) chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



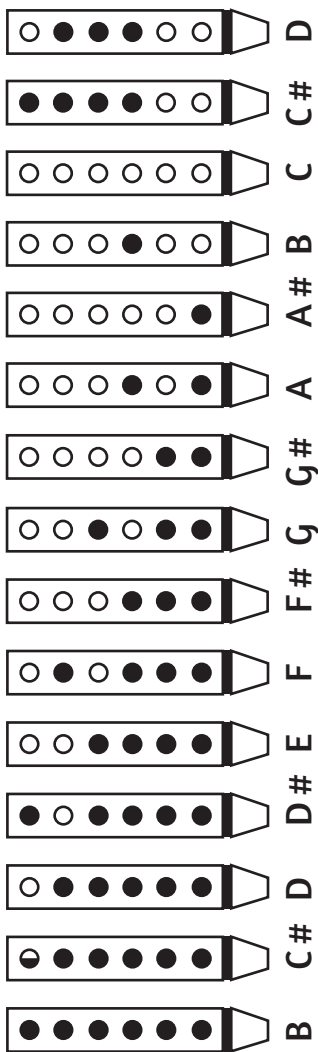
“B^b” (“A#”) chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



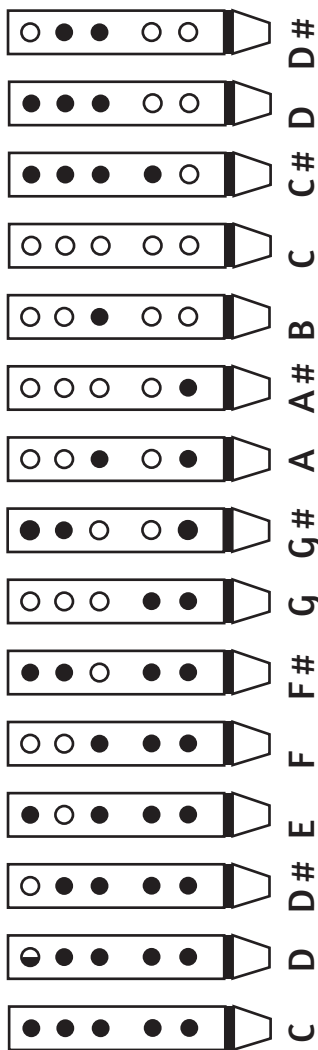
“B” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



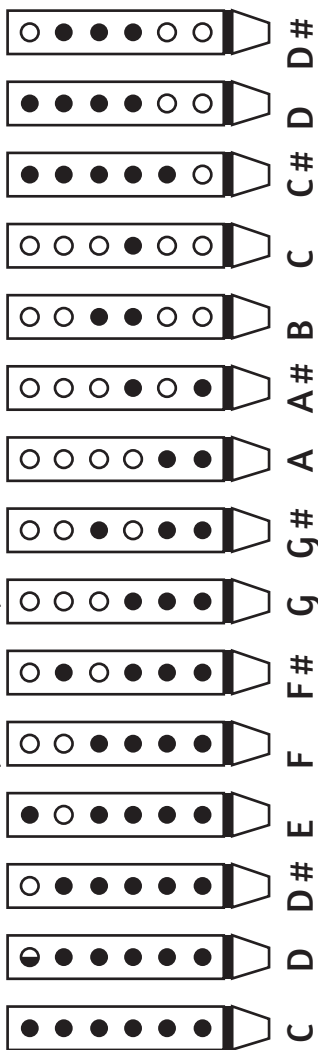
“B” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



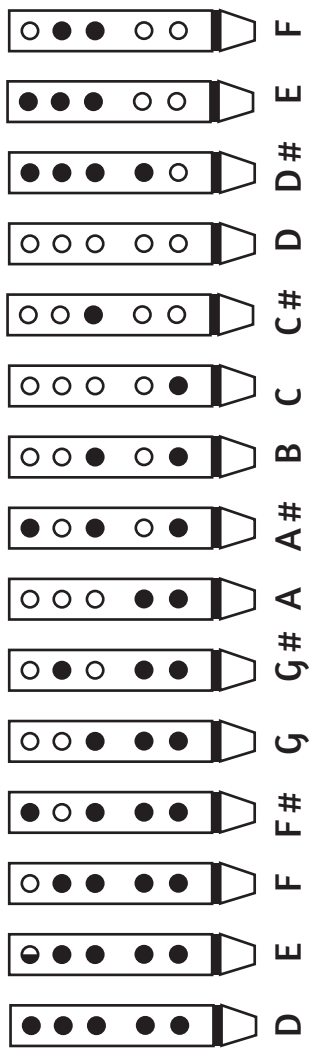
“C” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



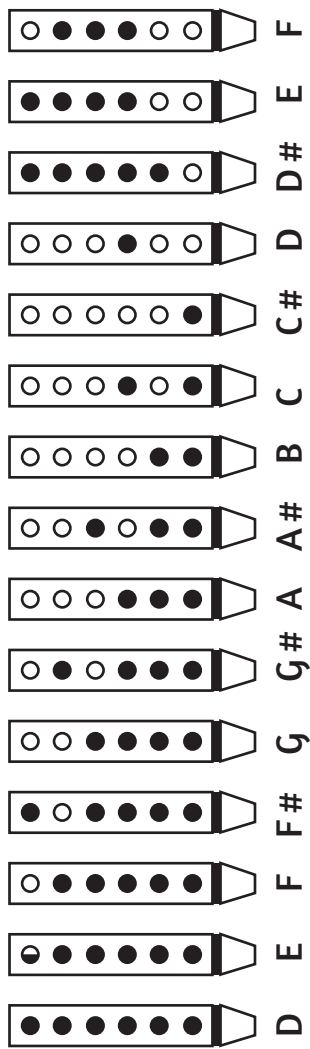
“C” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



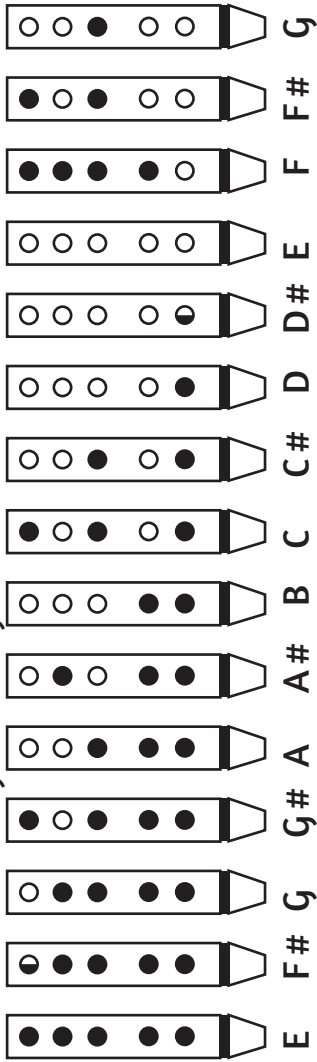
“D” chromatic scale for 5-hole



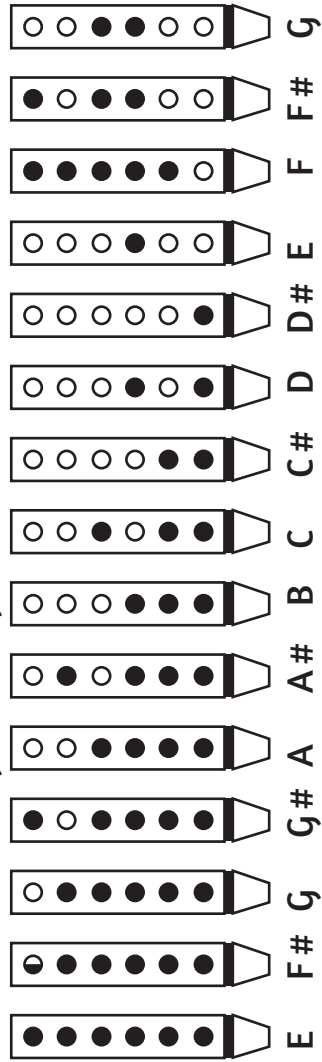
“D” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



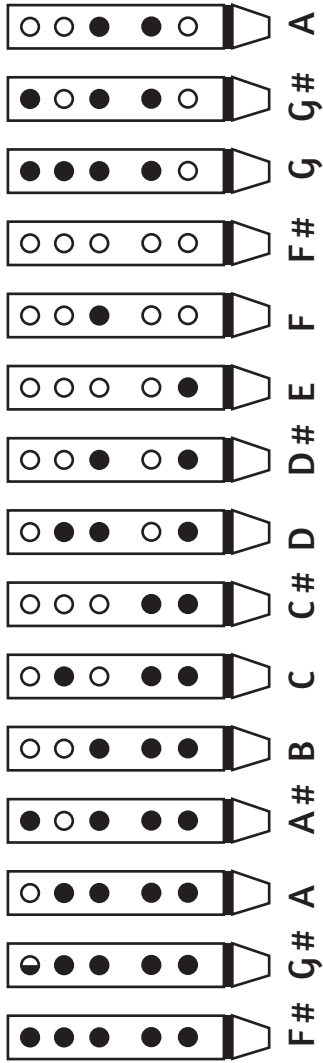
“E” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



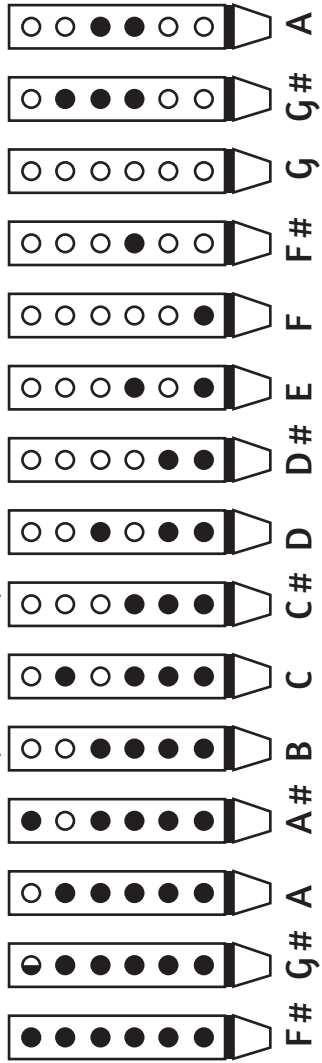
“E” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute



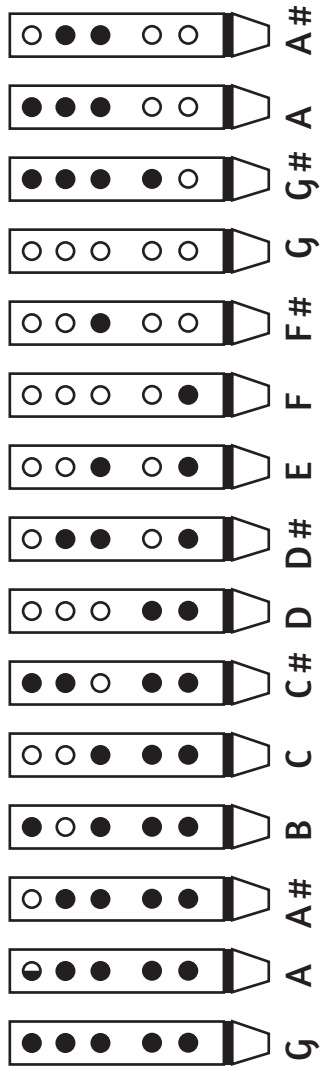
“F#” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



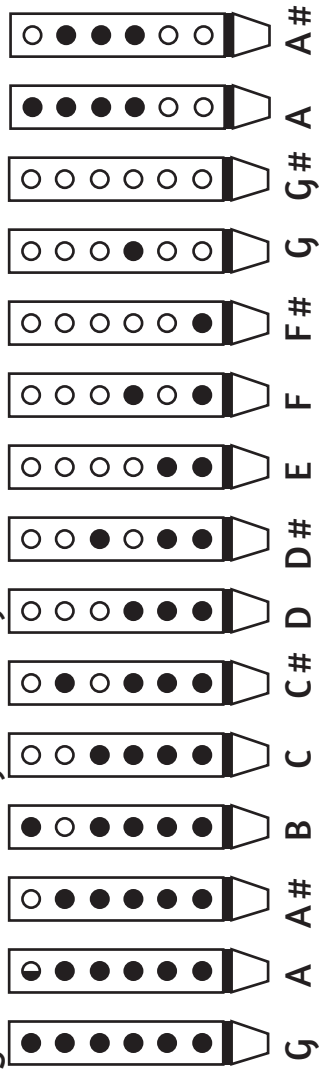
“F#” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute

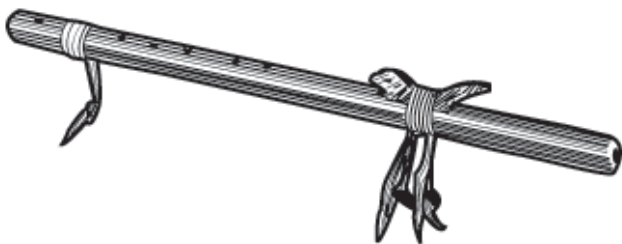


“G” chromatic scale for 5-hole flute



“G” chromatic scale for 6-hole flute





Playing Scales

The term “Scales” describes a sequence of notes that musically relate to each other. There are thousands of different scales found throughout the world and each has its own personality and feel.

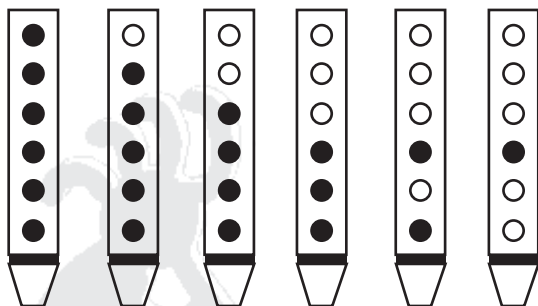
You have already experienced playing one scale. By simply playing up and down the flute with the third fingering hole from the top closed (when using a 6-hole flute) you have been playing a pentatonic minor scale. But many other scales can be played on the Native Flute and most are just as easy to learn. For instance, playing up and down the flute with the fourth fingering hole from the top closed instead of the third (on a 6-hole flute) is another type of pentatonic scale. This scale adds a unique bluesy quality to the flute.

When we play a song in a different scale, it changes the character and feel of a melody. This gives insight into new ways to play and will expand our style and song compositions so we can express ourselves more completely.

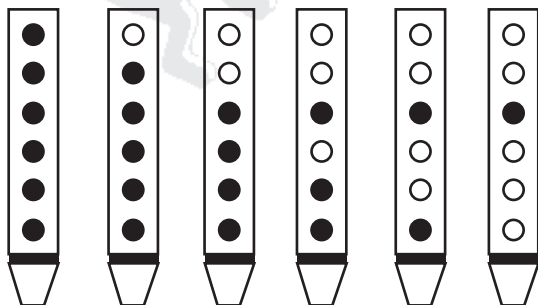
The fingering charts for the following scales are simple to learn and there is little or no musical knowledge required to use them. Practice following the fingering as they are described by the black dots, and the results will make sense. There are no notes assigned to these fingering charts because they can be played on any of our flutes no matter what the key.

Additional Scales

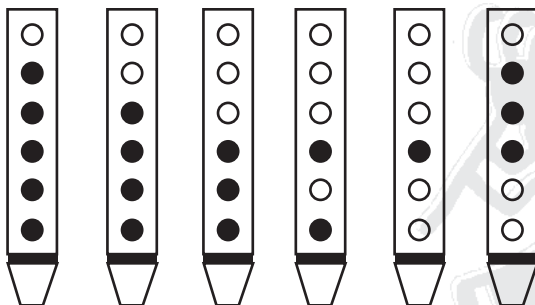
Pentatonic Minor Scale (3rd hole closed)



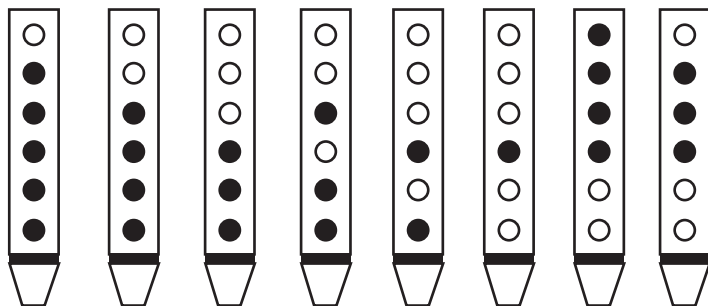
Pentatonic Minor Scale (4th hole closed)



Pentatonic Major Scale



Diatonic Major Scale



Blues Scale Variation

