



BASSOON

Even if you tune your instrument correctly, there are still some factors that will cause it to play out of tune. There are MANY factors that will affect pitch, but here is a summary of the most common:

FACTOR	AFFECT
Vowel Shape	An incorrect tongue position, or "voicing" can greatly affect pitch. To correct sharpness in pitch, open up the space inside your mouth by saying "AHH." To correct flatness in pitch, arch your tongue by thinking of the syllable "EEE." Focus on increasing your air support and aiming the air stream forward.
Embouchure Strength	To correct an embouchure that is sharp in pitch, relax the embouchure with the lips still puckered, but with less firmness. To correct an embouchure that is flat in pitch, firm up the embouchure by pressing the corners of the lips into the sides of the reed.
Strength of Reed	A reed that is too hard (difficult to produce sound on) will cause the pitch to be sharp . A reed that is too soft (almost too easy to produce sound on) will cause the pitch to be flat . Aim to play on "medium-soft" reeds. If you have to play on a "medium strength" reed, have your band director adjust its wires!
Age of Reed	A brand new reed that has not yet been broken in will tend to be sharp in pitch. As a reed gets older, the pitch will become flatter . Aim to rotate your reeds on a daily basis to extend their life, and retire a reed after it has been played for 10 to 15 hours. If the reed becomes moldy, throw it out sooner!
Temperature	Warm air temperature will cause the pitch to be sharp . Cold air temperature will cause the pitch to be flat . For best results, play in a space that is around 72 degrees Fahrenheit.
Dynamics	Playing louder dynamics will cause the pitch to be flatter . Playing softer dynamics air temperature will cause the pitch to be sharper . NOTE: This is the opposite of most other wind instruments!
Equipment	An instrument that is not in good working order will cause poor pitch overall. Leaking tone holes, cracks, bent rods, and instrument misalignment are all signs of an instrument in need of a repair. On a bassoon, a pad that is too closed will cause the pitch to play flat . A pad that is too open will cause the pitch to play sharp . Have the instrument checked by an instrument repair shop once a year.