



CLARINET

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
Amount of Mouthpiece	Taking too much or too little of the mouthpiece into your mouth will cause the pitch to be flat . To figure out the best place to put your mouth, take a single sheet of paper, and slide it in between the reed and the mouthpiece. When the piece of paper gets stuck, that is the amount of mouthpiece that should be placed in your mouth.
Embouchure Strength	To correct an embouchure that is sharp in pitch, relax the embouchure by pulling the chin muscles downwards and bringing in the corners of the mouth towards the mouthpiece. To correct an embouchure that is flat in pitch, firm up the embouchure by bringing the lower jaw slightly forward.
Vowel Shape	An incorrect tongue position can greatly affect pitch. To correct sharpness in pitch, lower your tongue by thinking of the syllable "OH." To correct flatness in pitch, arch your tongue by thinking of the syllable "EEE." Focus on increasing your air support.
Strength/Age of Reed	A reed that is too hard (brand new or usually a strength 3 or higher) will cause the pitch to be sharp . A reed that is too soft (older reeds or usually strength 2.5 or lower) will cause the pitch to be flat . Vandoren 2.5 reeds are great for beginners, but most of the strength depends on the mouthpiece being played. Experiment with different strengths to see what works best. Aim to rotate reeds on a daily basis to extend their life, and retire a reed after it has been played for 10 to 15 hours.
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 flat . Playing softer dynamics air temperature will cause the pitch to be sharp . 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, bent rods, or instrument misalignment are all signs of an instrument in need of a repair. On a clarinet, 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.