Clarinet Mentors Reed Strength Guide

This worksheet accompanies the video at: http://youtu.be/jCZPbfxA-sc

When you are learning your first notes, such as those listed here, a 2 or a 2-1/2 works best.





As soon as you begin playing in the higher register, the notes will respond better with a reed that is stiffer than a strength 2 (at least 2-1/2).



Once begin playing in the upper part of the high (or clarion) register, usually a 3 (or higher) reed will respond better for you.



In the altissimo register, for many people, a 3 - 1/2 helps to give these notes extra support.

This page gives you a rough guideline of what reed strengths usually work best for people as they play in different registers of the clarinet. Typically, you will begin clarinet on a softer reed strength, and move higher as you become more advanced.

The guidelines here work for most people who are playing in a classical style, or within most community bands and orchestras.

If you are playing a lot of jazz, klezmer, or other folk music that requires regular pitch bending, you may prefer to play on a slightly softer reed.

Your equipment also affects which reed strength is ideal for you. This will give you some guidelines to help you choose the strength that may best support the music that you are currently performing. You will need to experiment to decide what works best for you.