

How To Use Reed Rush to Adjust Clarinet Reeds



Materials Needed:

- Reed rush tool
- A flat, stable surface to work on.



Leblanc Reed Rush



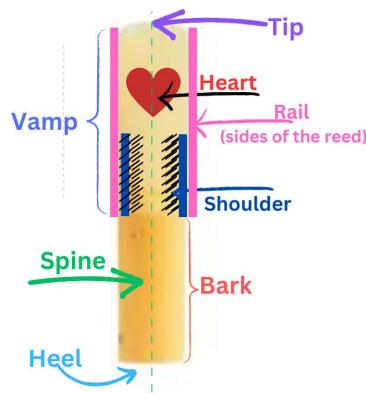
Equisetum hyemale
(Dutch rush/reed rush)

Steps:

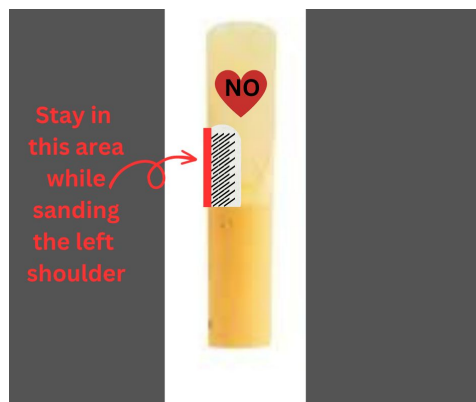
Reed rush can be used to make adjustments on clarinet reeds, much like sandpaper, by using the grooves of the reed rush to gently scrape away wood from the reed. The idea is the reed rush not only takes wood away from the reed, but in tandem presses minute particles of dust (taken off the cane) and seals the pores of the reed. This can help with preventing the reed from getting waterlogged.

Here's a general guide on how to use reed rush to adjust your clarinet reeds:

1. **Inspect the Reed:** Begin by examining the reed for any visible imperfections or irregularities. Look for warping, unbalanced sides, or any other issues that may affect the reed's performance.
2. **Identify Areas for Adjustment:** Determine the areas of the reed that need adjustment by performing a “balance” test. Common areas for adjustment include the shoulders and rails of the reed.



3. **Moisten the Reed Rush:** Reed Rush can be brittle when you remove it from the packaging. Soak the reed rush in a small container like a shot glass or Tupperware container for a couple of minutes. This makes the reed more pliable and easier to work with.
4. **Use the Reed Rush:** Take the reed rush and gently apply pressure to the desired areas of the reed. If the reed responds best with the mouthpiece centered, then the reed is balanced. If it's still hard for the reed to vibrate, try sanding an equal amount of wood off the right and left shoulders. If the reed vibrates better when you turn to the LEFT (dampening the left side), that means that the right side is vibrating freely and you'll want to sand down the LEFT shoulder of the reed to make the reed "balanced". If the reed vibrates better when you turn to the RIGHT (dampening the right side), that means that the left side is vibrating freely and you'll want to sand down the RIGHT shoulder of the reed to make the reed "balanced". The goal is to carefully and gradually scrape/adjust the reed, improving its response.



5. **Check Progress:** Periodically test the reed on your clarinet to assess the progress of the adjustments. Play different registers of the clarinet and check articulation to evaluate the reed's response, tone quality, and ease of playing.
6. **Fine-Tune as Needed:** Continue adjusting and fine-tuning the reed using the reed rush as necessary. Make small, incremental adjustments and test the reed after each one to achieve the desired playability. I like to use sandpaper for more dense sections of the reed and reed rush to make fine adjustments to the reed.
7. **Play Test:** Once you're satisfied with the adjustments, play your clarinet with the adjusted reed to ensure it meets your performance expectations.

Remember to be patient while using any reed-adjusting tool. It's important to make gradual adjustments and test the reed frequently to achieve the best results. If you're unsure about how to use reed rush or adjust your reeds, consider seeking guidance from a professional clarinetist or instructor.

Where to purchase reed rush:

Woodwind and Brasswind: <https://tinyurl.com/46m4zzbf>

Hickey's Music Center: <https://tinyurl.com/3ajypsj>

Muncy Winds Music Co.: <https://tinyurl.com/48fx59bt>

Helpful resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjstmkYtNqo>

<https://stephan-vermeersch.be/balancing-reeds-with-dutch-rush.html>

<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/species/equisetum/hyemale/>