

Objective: Hold my instrument correctly

It's important to know how to hold the saxophone correctly when first learning to play, to get the best out of the instrument and your body. Here's how to get started:

1. First assemble the saxophone following the instructions in the relevant worksheet.
2. Put the neck sling around your neck, attach it to the saxophone and adjust the length as described in the worksheet on blowing a steady note.
3. Put your right hand in position, with your thumb under the hook on the back of the saxophone. You should not feel the weight of the saxophone on your thumb; if you do, make the neck sling shorter by pulling up the plastic adjuster; keep checking and experimenting with the length until it feels comfortable.
4. Put your left hand in position with your finger and thumb placed correctly to play note B as described in the worksheet on blowing a steady note.
5. Make sure that you are standing up straight or sitting up straight; look in a mirror to check.
6. It is particularly important for saxophone that your head is straight; look in a mirror to check, and if necessary, adjust the position of the mouthpiece and neck so that your head remains straight.
7. The alto saxophone is usually best played in front of the body; the soprano is also played in front; the tenor will be more comfortable at the side.
8. Make sure that your shoulders, arms and hands are relaxed to enable fingers to move effectively as you learn; if you feel tension then try rotating your shoulders and giving your arms and fingers a shake to loosen them.
9. Get into the habit of practising in front of a mirror and being aware of tension in your body; adjust playing position as required and keep checking.
10. Congratulations, you now know how to hold your saxophone correctly. Tick the fifth point off your award card!