

Limitations and Opportunities: Why isn't it working?

1. Fingers?

- a. use as many as you can comfortably—try playing one-handed for example, or only on the top three or bottom three holes.
- b. stretch but don't overstretch—reach comes with time.
- c. check for fingers completely covering the holes. Try a mirror.
- d. flatten your fingertips on the holes to increase the surface area.
- e. try moving both your bottom ring and pinky finger at the same time. They are tied together by muscles and nerves.
- f. forget the bottom hole—move up one hole to establish the fundamental. Your scale will be one note short for a while.

2. Breath?

- a. play the fundamental softly and gently like blowing out a candle.
- b. play long, sustained notes, but don't push 'til you're empty—keep some reserve. Try to use only 2/3rds your capacity at one time.
- c. open and relax your throat and mouth. Think quality, not quantity.
- d. anticipate the end of a phrase and breathe before you get there.

3. Flute?

- a. find a better fit; smaller flute, smaller holes, articulated holes.
- b. check for leaks in seams or block surface contact. Wax only in a fix.
- c. play facing a wall or window to hear your flute as others do.
- d. move the block away from you (sharpen) or toward you (flatten).
- e. off notes need more breath (sharpen) or less breath (flatten).