

Flutists that have their keys tilting backwards:

Photos are from Youtube flute videos.

In a recent discussion of headjoint alignment for flutists on Galway Flute Chat, I mentioned how it's possible for flutists to use standard alignment (the headjoint center-of-blowhole to center-of-keys), and not realize that because of this that their keys are tilting backwards, creating arm-strain while they play. See notes and video of this discussion at <http://www.jennifercluff.com/blog>
Below are several pictures from youtube. The first three flutists are all fairly advanced, and play fairly well. However because their keys are tilting backwards, they are risking injury to the arms over time, and may be struggling with the flute rolling backwards in the hands during play. Notice how the left arm has to reach up and over the keys, and how the right wrist is cocked back.



What is notable about all three pictures (above and left) is that there is no problem playing this way UNTIL there is muscular injury or repetitive strain sensed by the player. Unfortunately, once it has begun, RSI's can interrupt a flutist's advancement. Far better to catch the signs early, and simply realign the headjoint as a preventative. See video at this link: <http://uk.youtube.com/user/fluteloophost>

A fourth picture (right) is of an average band student whose flexible finger joints have allowed her to develop a very idiosyncratic hand position in the left hand. The ring finger is bent backwards along its length. Note too, the severe cocking back of the right wrist as she seeks a way to balance the flute with this "standard" headjoint position. In looking for alignment problems with students, also note those that are reaching with the chin, poking the head forward, and down onto the flute's lip plate in order to make the incorrect alignment work.

