

How to align your flute's footjoint for best reach

Everyone's finger lengths are different. Long fingered flutists may have extra-long pinky fingers, or medium length fingered flutists could have the world's shortest pinky (!) All combinations of long and short fingers can be found on any flute player's hand. So the footjoint's position should be tailored to suit each player.

a) Start with the ball at the end of the footjoint's rod (silver ball) lined up with the CENTER of the ring-finger's key (D).

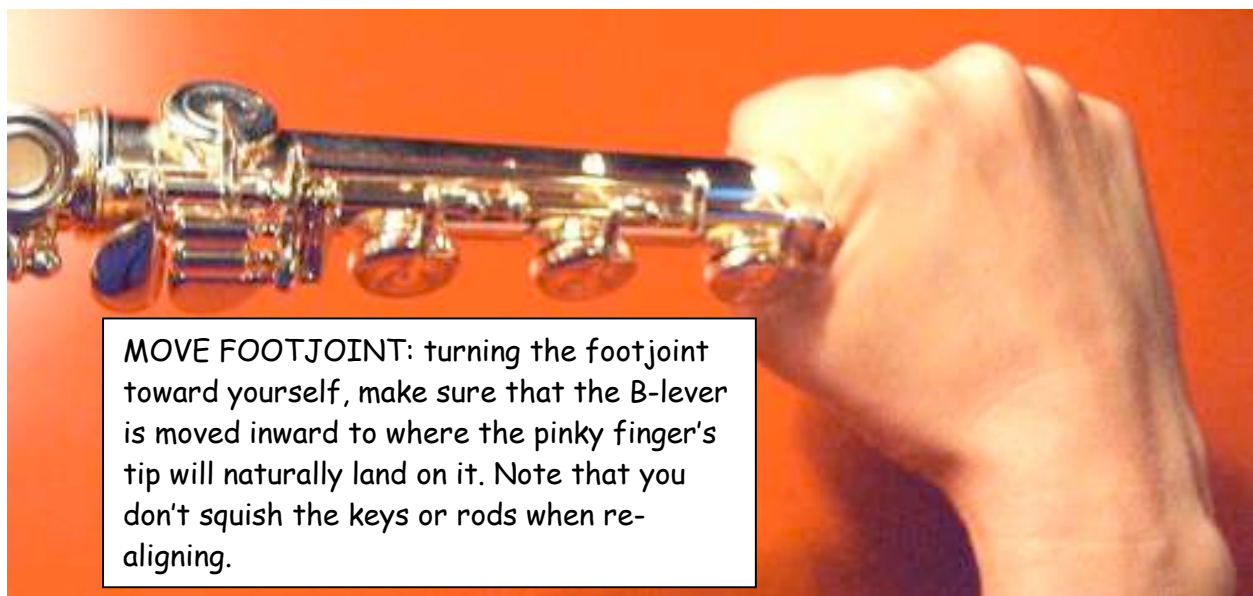
b) Place the three right hand finger tip pads on the F, E, and D keys at a 90 degree angle. The three fingers will approach the flute directly, without any angling; just straight on, as if to measure the lengths of the fingers in lining up on the three key centers.

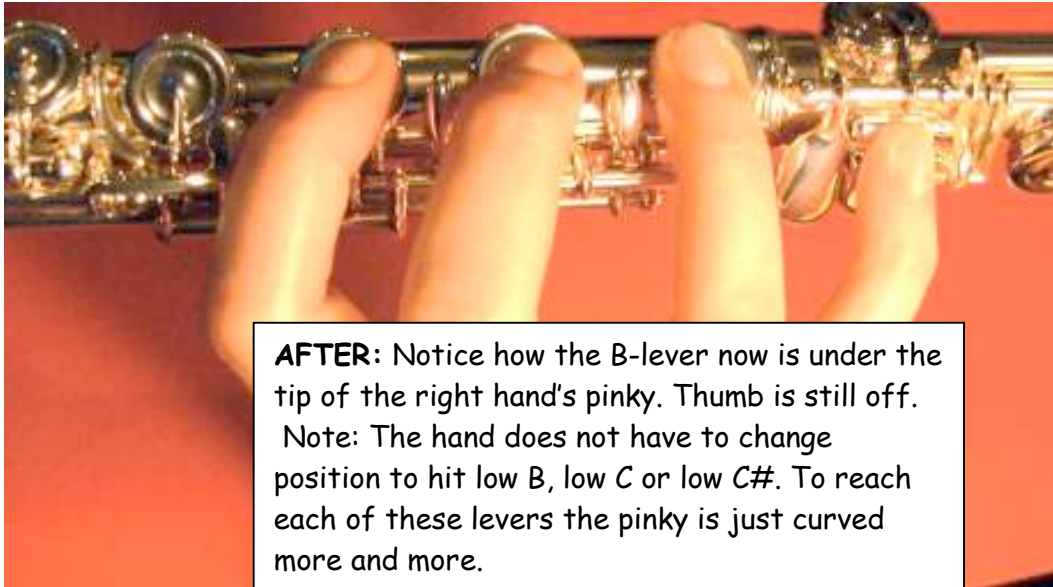
Leave the right thumb off the flute for this.



c) Allow each finger to curve naturally and fully cover the open-holes in F, E, and D (or use plugs in the open-holes, and cover the plugs with the finger ends)

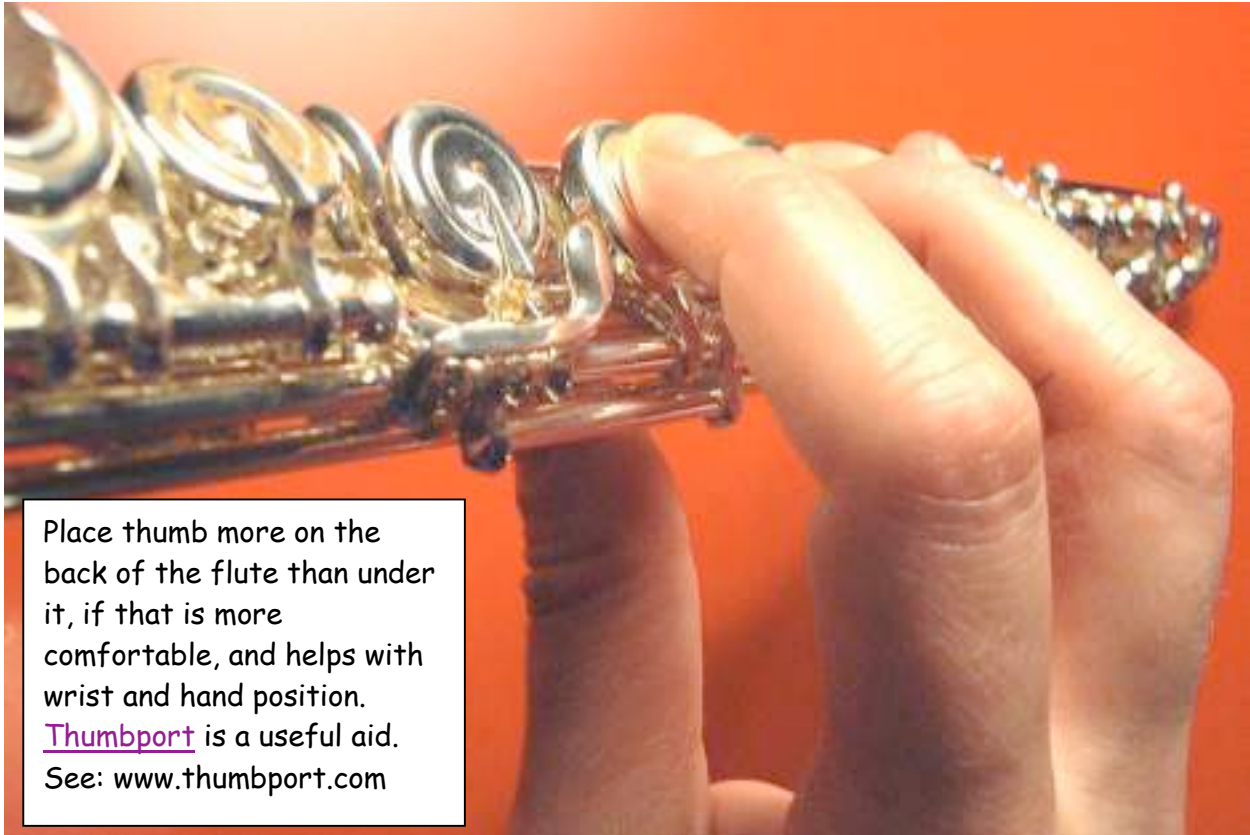
d) Move the footjoint slightly until the pinky naturally lands on the B and C levers without having to reach for them or change the finger's position.





AFTER: Notice how the B-lever now is under the tip of the right hand's pinky. Thumb is still off.
Note: The hand does not have to change position to hit low B, low C or low C#. To reach each of these levers the pinky is just curved more and more.

e) Now put your thumb on the flute's tube in a natural, easy position (possibly more on the back of the flute than under it.)

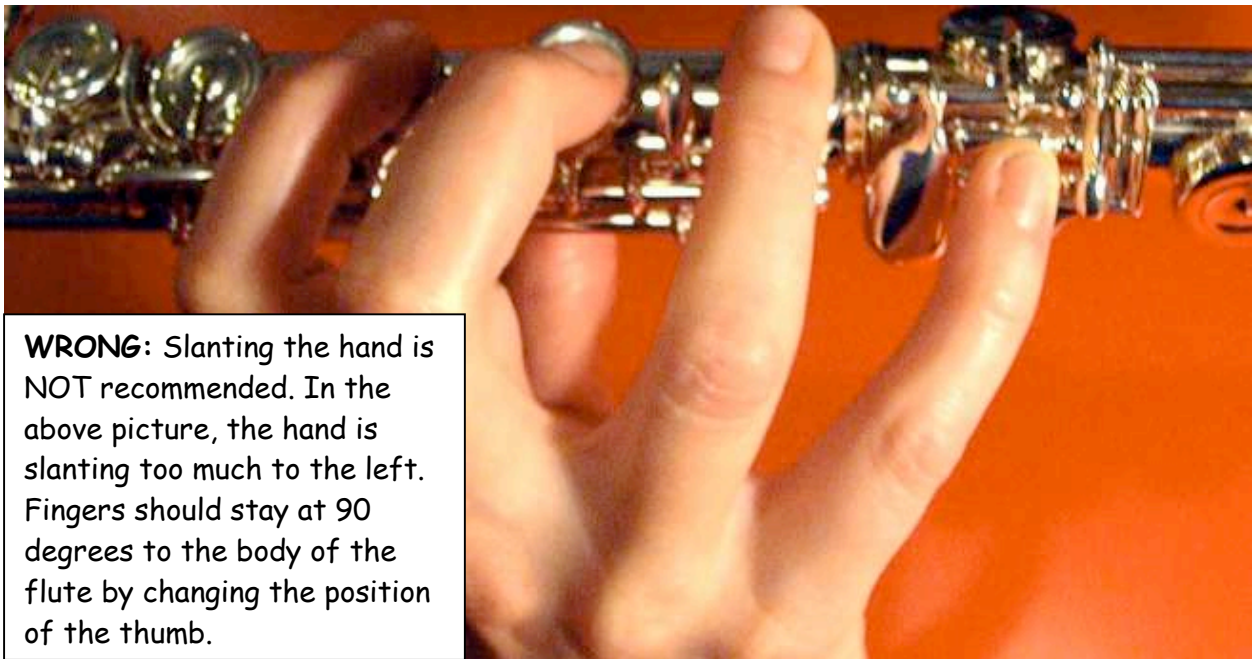


Place thumb more on the back of the flute than under it, if that is more comfortable, and helps with wrist and hand position.
[Thumbport](#) is a useful aid.
See: www.thumbport.com

f) Check that the right hand pinky still lands perfectly, without stretching, on the B-lever. The B-lever will usually be a lot closer when the footjoint is slightly rolled towards the hand.

This way of setting the footjoint to the right distance for your pinky to land on naturally greatly increases the ease of using the footjoint's keys.

Double check that your hand is at a right angle to the body of the flute. Slanting your hand to reach the keys is NOT recommended.



The right hand position and pinky reach is better when the hand is straight. A comfortable reach insures that the pinky is free to move by curving more for low C# & Eb, and curving less for low B. Trilling is much much faster with a curved pinky on the right hand.

Check with your private flute teacher to ascertain that your footjoint position is one that allows you to:

- reach the footjoint keys without having to strain or twist the hand
- find a comfortable spot for the right thumb
- play low notes without accidentally uncovering open-holes such as the ring finger
- play faster and more easily in the very low register
- trill faster from D to Eb by curving the pinky
- reach more easily when having to play quickly on the footjoint keys

This article written July 2006 by Jennifer Cluff