

TIPS TO GET KAN

To get higher harmonics, for example to move from otsu 乙 to kan 甲, the velocity of the air across the blowing edge must increase. This is sometimes called 'overblowing'. Here are three ways to achieve this.

1. **Blow Harder:** The sound is rough and more breathy. It is not possible to play high notes very softly using this technique. This technique should only be used if you want a rough or breathy sound..
2. **Narrow the embouchure:** this is the preferred method and with this technique both forte and pianissimo sounds are possible. Achieve a narrow embouchure by increasing the vertical pressure between the lips only. Be careful not to change distort the shape of the embouchure.

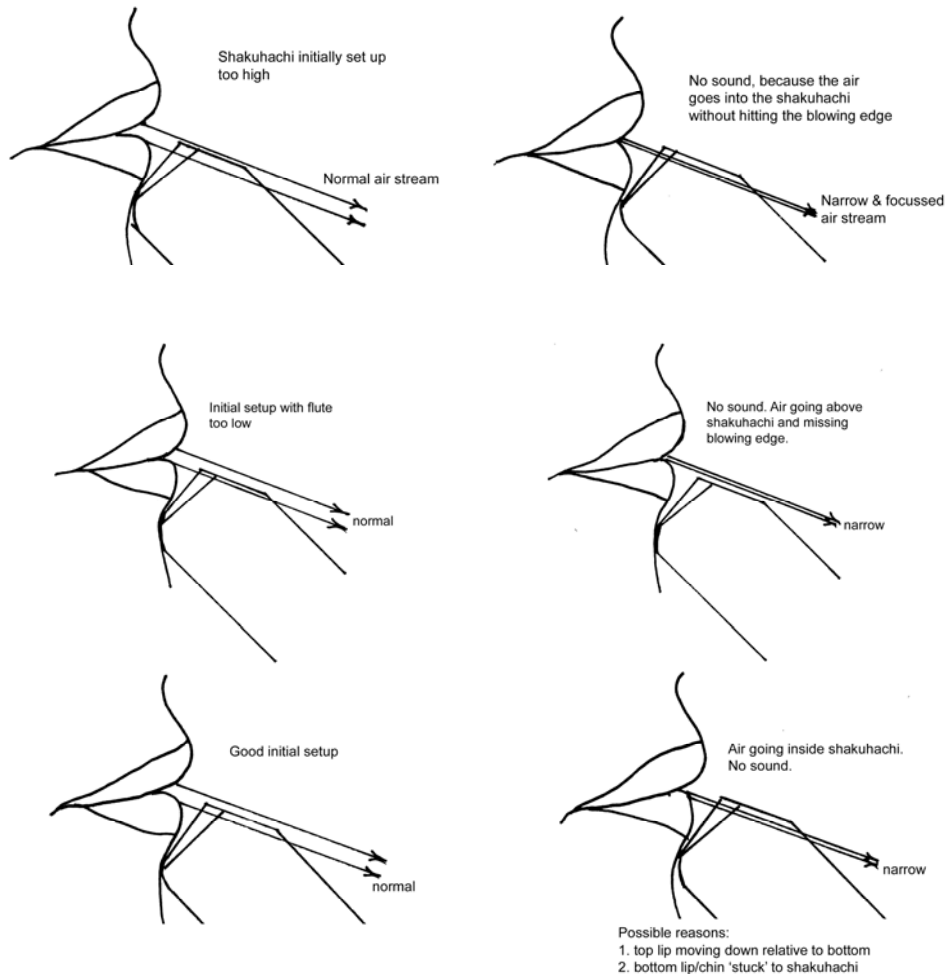


3. **Get closer:** Closer to the lips the air is moving faster, so move the lips closer to the blowing edge or pull the shakuhachi closer to your lips. It is easier to achieve high sounds but the pitch is lower (meri). Compensate by opening the side of the flute. This is the best method to achieve very high (dai kan 大甲) sounds.

Why is there no sound at all?

If the sound disappears when trying to change from otsu to kan, it is most likely a problem of alignment.

Here are a few illustrations to explain this.



Exercise 1:

Start each note by blowing through closed lips. Imagine you are 'spitting a grain of rice' across the room. If you do this, then the first sound should be KAN. If not, then the alignment is incorrect.

Exercise 2:

Play an OTSU note (start with RI) and, by gradually increasing the pressure between the lips, change slowly to a KAN sound. Do this with all notes and venture into DAI KAN.

Stop at the transition point, playing both OTSU and KAN at the same time.

Learn to play all notes just below the transition to the next harmonic.

Exercise 3:

Practice tapering all notes slowly into pianissimo, and beyond. Do this for OSTU, KAN, DAI KAN and MERI notes.