



How Long Does A Clarinet Reed Last?

A quick answer for a complicated question.

Most clarinetists know that if a reed is chipped it should be thrown away. It makes sense that the reed can't vibrate optimally if it can't vibrate evenly. But what if your reed isn't cracked? Is it still okay? Not necessarily.

There are three basics that will help your reeds last longer. First, have more than one good reed at any time. Playing two reeds means they'll last at least twice as long. Second, break your reeds in gradually to increase their consistency and life-span. You can learn more about breaking in reeds in my articles "Reeds 101" and "Reeds 201." Third, try not to play on one reed more than an hour a day. That means the reed you used in band class shouldn't be the one you practice on in the evening.



Always label your reeds with the date you begin the break in process.

If you are using two reeds and have broken them in properly, they should last 3-4 weeks. You can rise above the reed madness by breaking in 2 new reeds every 2 weeks. That way you'll have 2 in their prime while you break in the next reeds. Remember, even if the reed looks okay, it might be causing you more trouble than it's worth.