

Recorder Digits



Fingerings for Color Reader

**Beginner Advice
from Ken Wollitz**

**Recorder in
C**

Title

**Recorder Digits
Fingerings for Color Ereader**

Beginner Advice

from Ken Wollitz

Recorder in C

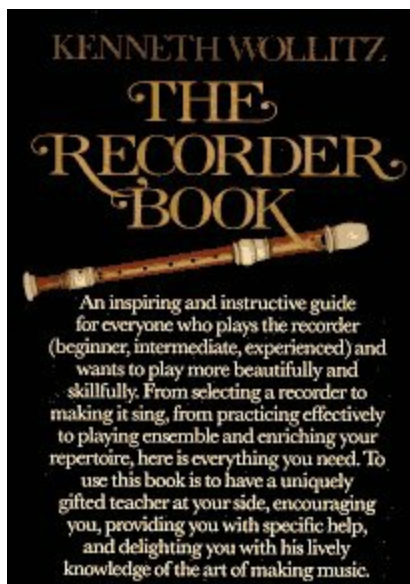
Version 2.11

Introduction

This is a static display of the recorder fingerings shown in the Windows program Recorder Digits after loading the wollitz.txt file, which contains fingering advice taken from the book *The Recorder Book* by Ken Wollitz. You can read about this here:

<http://www.rahsoft.net/skwoll.htm>

These diagrams and descriptions are intended primarily for recorder beginners. It gives the standard fingering for each note, plus remarks about playing the note. All fingerings and remarks are taken from the book *The Recorder Book* by Kenneth Wollitz (Knopf, 1981).



Ken Wollitz, who was my recorder teacher for 10 years, gave me permission to extract and reformat this small portion of his book for use in Recorder Digits. This ebook file is a reformat of a Recorder Digits' report produced using this information.

The fingerings and remarks are taken verbatim from the book, except where some wording that was appropriate for the printed text does not work correctly on the screen display. In such cases, modifications are made in square brackets. Also, editor notes are added in square brackets.

All excerpts Copyright Kenneth Wollitz, 1966, 1981

This PDF is derived from the epub for Nook. It should look OK on any device that can view PDFs.

To choose a note, you can use Chapters (each Octave and note is a separate entry), or the Choose Note pages, which is probably easier. Each note has its own page.

Choose Note - Octave 1



[Note C, Octave1](#)

[Note C#, Octave1](#)

[Note D, Octave1](#)

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Choose Note - Octave 2



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[Note G, Octave3](#)

[Note Ab, Octave3](#)

[Note A, Octave3](#)

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[Note B, Octave3](#)

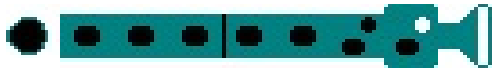
Octave 1

Note: C, octave 1



Remember that in order to get the pinky on hole 7 without cramping the rest of your hand you must allow fingers five and six to extend beyond the shaft of the instrument. Blowing the low C, you start the airstream rather slowly, an easy gesture of the breath with almost no tongue action. The tongue comes away at the same instant that one starts the breath. If you start the low C with too much air the note will overblow, producing something near an C'-sharp, an octave and a semitone higher. If you do tend to get this cracking effect on the low C and some of the other low notes, check first to see that you are not starting the breath stream too fast, or putting too strong an articulation at the beginning of the note. If neither of these is the problem, then check to see if one finger or another is not quite sealing its hole.

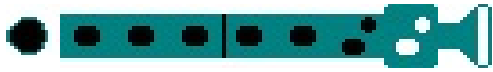
Note: C#, octave 1



The low C# has the same fingering as the C, except that the pinky is not quite so far onto the instrument, and therefore covers only the righthand hole, speaking from the player's point of view, and looms over the lefthand hole somewhat.

The action of going from one to the other (i.e. C to C#) is one of pulling the little finger back away from the instrument just a little bit. The low C# is even more fragile than the low C, and has to be started very delicately. On most instruments it is a weak note, one of relatively slight conviction.

Note: D, octave 1

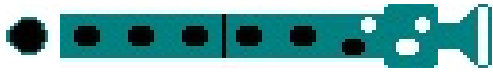


For the low D, unless it is preceded or followed by fingerings requiring the pinky (C and F), the position of the right hand is as the left hand, finger number six of the right hand being extended and straight, as is finger number three of the left hand.

Low D is an ambiguous note. It's richer in overtones, usually, than the low C, and the overtones usually are not quite in tune with the basic harmonic of the sound. Therefore if one blows too strongly on the note, thereby bringing in more of the upper harmonics, these will begin to beat in an unpleasant way with the basic vibration.

A low D will have its best sonority if you don't blow it too hard but rather try to focus in on the tone. The note is more telling if blown softly but in tune.

Note: Eb, octave 1



Eb involves pulling finger six away from the instrument just a little bit, in a fashion analogous to what one does with the pinky for the low C#. Moving quickly from the low D to the Eb is required in some music, including, of course, Bach's (he never spared the performer); there are two ways of making the action. One is to quickly pull the sixth finger away the little bit necessary to uncover one of the double holes.

The other is to push the knuckles of the sixth finger down a little bit so that the end of the finger rises up and away from the instrument just enough to uncover the left hole, while still covering the right. Either way is awkward and takes some practice, and that practice will be done when the musical situation requiring it arises.

Eb is another rather weak note and may tend to be sharp. If it is slightly sharp, you can correct it by blowing softer. If it is more than slightly sharp, try adding half of hole 7.

Note: E, octave 1



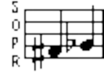
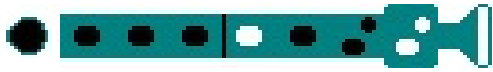
Low E is a good, solid note, and can be delivered with a fairly strong stream of air. But caution: This note is sharp on some recorders.

Note: F, octave 1



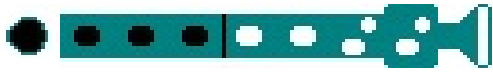
F is usually a very secure note, solid in intonation, and doesn't require a special accommodation of the breath. Some people fall into the bad habit of not putting the seventh finger down. On any properly made recorder the F will be too high in pitch unless the seventh finger is down. Thus the fingering for the F, like the fingering for the low C, requires the right hand to be more on the instrument.

Note: F#, octave 1



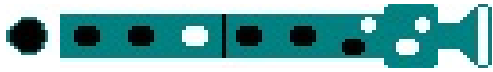
F# is one of the weakest of the cross-fingered notes. It tends to be too sharp, and therefore should be blown more gently than the notes surrounding it. For example, in a sequence E, F#, G, the E and the G can take more breath than the F#. One should be aware of this particularly if the F# occurs as a sustained note.

Note: G, octave 1



G is a very solid, clear, easy-to-blow note.

Note: Ab, octave 1



Ab will always require half of 6, and on some instruments all of 6 will be necessary to bring the note really into tune. But the simplistic fingering of



is not adequate on most instruments, usually being too sharp.

Therefore one uses this fingering only in very fast passages where the normal fingering would be inconvenient; for example, a fast run of notes, E, F#, Ab, A. It is awkward to go from F#, with all of the sixth finger down, then swiftly to half-fingering for the Ab.

However, over time you will find that you become more and more adept at inserting the requisite half-finger on 6 for the Ab in faster and faster passages.

Note: A, octave 1



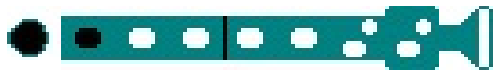
A is a solid note; no problems.

Note: Bb, octave 1



On some instruments the sixth finger may also be required, although usually not. Fingerings on the recorder are complicated enough to start with, so one always looks for the simplest true fingering for each note.

Note: B, octave 1



No problems.

Octave 2

Note: C, octave 2



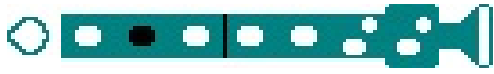
No problems.

Note: C#, octave 2



No problems.

Note: D, octave 2



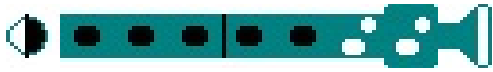
No problems.

Note: Eb, octave 2



Eb' is the first note in the second register. This is the standard fingering with the thumbhole uncovered, unlike the cracked thumb used for all other notes in the upper registers.

Note: E, octave 2



The same as the lower E, but with a faster airstream. Use this fingering [above]. I know that



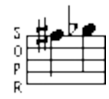
gives almost the same result, but only to an uncritical ear, since this secondary fingering is often harsher in sound.

Note: F, octave 2



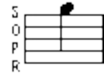
F' presents no peculiar problems.

Note: F#, octave 2



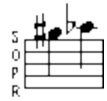
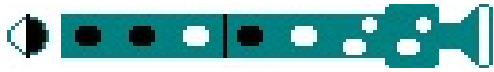
F# again is a slightly sharp note on many instruments, and you have to be sensitive.

Note: G, octave 2



No problems. Obviously, a faster airstream than for the G an octave lower.

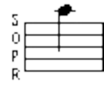
Note: Ab, octave 2



Ab' is a delicate note. It is the first note in the second register that requires special articulation. This is one of the notes described earlier in the section [in the book] "Tongue," wherein you start the note as much by a gesture of the breath as by a gesture of the tongue.

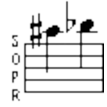
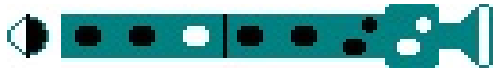
You can tongue rather strongly from G to G', but from Ab' on upward, the tongue action must be quicker and lighter, and the breath action takes over as the major source of articulation. The degree to which this is true varies from recorder to recorder, but Ab' is definitely a delicate note.

Note: A, octave 2



A' is also a delicate note, requiring the previously described articulation and breath modifications [under note Ab'].

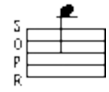
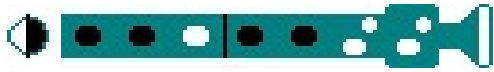
Note: Bb, octave 2



Bb' is the first note of the third register. You may be interested to know that it is really low D in its third mode of vibration.

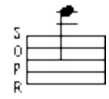
If you want to check this out, you can try playing a low D; and then, blowing with a little stronger huff of air, using the same fingering, you will overblow at somewhat more than an octave, somewhere between a D' and an Eb'. And then, if you can get it, with the appropriate huff of air, you will strike the next mode of vibration, which will be approximately the Bb'. This Bb', from the third mode of vibration, of course comes much more easily with the appropriate venting of fingers, that is, the fingering given [above]. This note is easy to produce.

Note: B, octave 2



High B' is easy to produce.

Octave 3

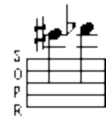


Note: C, octave 3



C" is a fragile and delicate note, as we will all attest. Again, it is a note that requires a very precise gesture of the breath, and a very slight but quick presence of the tongue. We're really on the high wire with this note. If breath and tongue are just right we can produce the C" cleanly, but the parameters are narrow!

Note: C#, octave 3



C#" is the most problematical note on the ... recorder. It is problematical because there is no really satisfactory fingering for it, yet it is a required note in some compositions, most notably in Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto, and it often appears as well in compositions for other instruments into whose bailiwick recorder players choose to venture.

Perhaps, but only perhaps, the fingering given here is the best solution. This fingering introduces a new concept, that of "leaking." Leaking is doing the opposite of what one normally tries to do - that is, to close the hole fully and securely. To "leak," one closes the hole in question, but not quite, and the amount of not-quiteness varies from leakage to leakage; which is to say, from esoteric fingering to esoteric fingering.

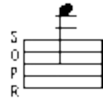
There are two ways of leaking: either by arching the finger, or by drawing the finger back a little. Arching leaks from the underside of the finger, furthest from the tip. Drawing back leaks from the tip of the finger.

Usually the arching technique works better in terms of the fingering requirements which surround a note requiring this technique. Thus you arch your finger slightly so that it will leak on the underside. For the C#", a leaking 5 is more helpful than a leaking 2.

Another, and radically different, way of getting the high C#" is to finger the high D" just above it, and stop the bell hole of the recorder against your knee; the result will be a perfect C#" [shown below]. But the technique is hazardous to the front teeth, especially if the note has to be gotten out quickly.



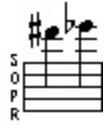
Note: D, octave 3



The high D^{'''} speaks much more easily than the notes just below it. A clear, strong stream of air is all that is needed. Often the D^{'''} is too sharp unless one adds either a half of 7, or all of 7 [shown below]. Thus, you must check the fingering of this highest D^{'''} against the D' an octave lower to be sure it is not too sharp.



Note: Eb, octave 3



At this point we are in the stratosphere, and fingerings vary. Another possibility, somewhat flatter, is

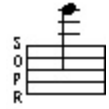


A sharper alternative is



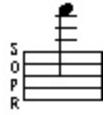
One has to experiment with one's recorder to find the best fingerings.

Note: E, octave 3



High E" is a note which requires quite a blast of air. But it can come out quite clearly if one hits the note with a breath stream of the appropriately fast speed.

Note: F, octave 3

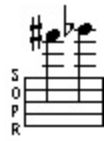
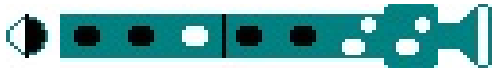


This hypothetical note works on some instruments, but not all.

[finger 5 partially covers its hole; finger 6 fully covers the left hole (from the player's point of view), but only partially covers the right - very awkward!]

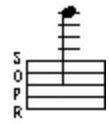
[The diagram for this strange fingering looks somewhat different here because it is implemented in a different way from the diagrams for other notes]

Note: F#, octave 3



The high F#" is fingered exactly like a high B', but one addresses the note with a much stronger, faster stream of air. This is a very strong, brisk note, and one which, like many of these extremely high notes, is not required in most musical contexts, although it has excellent value as an extender of one's technique in playing high notes.

Note: G, octave 3



This note(?) requires a veritable blast of air. And usually the G" produced will be quite sharp. It is very raw - but required, nonetheless, by at least one composition of Telemann's. I have yet to hear this note sound pretty.

Note: Ab, octave 3

[This is beyond even the "extended" range of the recorder and is not covered in the book]

Note: A, octave 3

[This is beyond even the "extended" range of the recorder and is not covered in the book]

Note: Bb, octave 3

[This is beyond even the "extended" range of the recorder and is not covered in the book]

Note: B, octave 3

[This is beyond even the "extended" range of the recorder and is not covered in the book]

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