

Using the Thumb B Flat Fingering

By Steve Hommel

The Thumb Bb fingering is the first fingering displayed for Bb on exercise #1 on page 1 of the *First Semester Workbook*.

Thumb Bb is actually the correct fingering when playing diatonically in a flat key, and is much easier for most beginners than 1 and 1. It is for some reason not presented in most method books (except in the comprehensive fingering charts in the back), which further complicates the challenge for beginning flutes. The reason given for this is that the *1 and 1* fingering makes it easier to balance the instrument. However, I have found that although a small minority of beginners may need to put the first finger of the right hand down to balance the flute, the vast majority do not. It is also possible to put down the first finger of the right hand while also depressing the thumb Bb key as a temporary solution to the balance problem. When using the thumb Bb in the key of Bb concert, students should keep their left thumb on that key for *all* notes. (Except of course, C.)