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## Tenor sax finger positions

### How to hold a tenor sax. Where to put your fingers on a saxophone.

The Notes Are The Same For All Saxophones . Meaning if you're playing a tenor, you play a C the same way you play a C on an alto or soprano etc. So these fingering lessons apply to you regardless of which type of sax you are playing. The Saxophone is a Transposing Instrument Where it gets confusing to some people is the transposition of your particular sax compared to concert pitch. This is the way your note from your transposing instrument (Bb and Eb saxophone) matches up with a non-transposing instrument like a guitar or piano (concert pitch). You can ignore all this transposing theoretical stuff at this point and just learn your fingerings, or if you want to learn how it works, then check out one of my other blog posts Saxophone Keys Explained for a detailed explanation on how this all works. Saxophone Fingering Chart PDF - Better SaxDownload.it's time to discuss the saxophone fingering chart.You've got your brand new saxophone assembled correctly, neck strap in place, reed on, and ready to go.



(If you need a hand, check out our video below.) Watch the video for saxophone assembly/disassembly tips here. It's time to start jamming on your first notes, but when you go to place your left hand on the keys at the top of the horn, there's a problem: There's five keys to choose from and all these extras on the side. Where do your fingers go? What do all these other keys do? How do you play the notes to your favorite tune? From the first basic notes you'll typically learn on the saxophone to the full range of the horn, special shortcut and trill keys, and even up into the altissimo register for all you advanced players out there, we want to provide you with a comprehensive guide to saxophone fingerings. In this first post, we're going to start with the basic fingerings for when you're just starting out. Stay tuned for later installments, and let us know what fingerings you're most curious about in the comments. You may be wondering about the difference in saxophone fingerings between the soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones. The short answer is, there isn't a difference. Once you know how to play on any of these saxophones, you can easily switch between baritone and soprano, tenor and alto without having to learn different fingerings to play the same notes. However, there are a few additional key options on a couple of the saxophones. For example, many pro-level baritone saxophones include a low A key, which extends the range of the horn lower.



Baritone sax with low A key On the soprano sax, many professional models will include a high G key to extend the saxophone's range a little higher. Soprano sax with high G key In addition, some older saxophones, won't have a high F-sharp key, which means some alternate fingerings will be needed to play this note. Horn without high F-sharp key These are the exceptions and usually don't come into play until after you've been practicing for awhile. Don't worry though. We've got you covered, and if you have questions about how to play a particular note on any saxophone, let us know in the comments. When you first take the horn out of the case, you'll want to learn some basic fingerings first, namely where to put the index, middle and ring fingers of your left and right hands on the horn. Your left hand will always play the keys on the upper part of the saxophone. The right hand goes on the bottom. To start, let's concentrate on what's called the upper stack of the saxophone. You'll notice there's a thumb rest, usually it's a black or gold platform, on the back of the saxophone facing your body. As the name suggests, this is where you can rest your left thumb. Left hand thumb rest Just above the thumb rest there's a button that can easily be controlled by your thumb. This is the octave key, which when pressed takes the basic fingerings and lets you play them an octave higher. Octave key The rest of your hand should wrap around the front of the saxophone comfortably. You'll notice three separate skinny, long keys — called palm keys — rest near the palm of your left hand. Palm keys Near your pinky finger, you'll also notice with a little stretching you can reach a series of four keys arranged as a table. These are called the spatula keys. Spatula keys Now back to the left hand and those five keys you have to choose from. Your first finger, the index finger, goes not on the first key (this is the front F key, which we'll cover later) but on the second key in the row. There's a smaller key in between the second and fourth keys in the stack, which is the bis key. Skip over this smaller key and put your second finger, the middle finger, on the next large key. And your third finger, the ring finger, goes on the final large key in the grouping. Left hand placement With these three basic keys, you can play your first notes, and believe it or not your first simple songs. Congratulations! Here's how. The saxophone works with what I like to call an additive method. To play new notes on the saxophone, you keep pressing down additional fingers to change the pitch. So for example, when you press down your first finger and close that first key, you're playing the note B. When you add your second finger and close that key, you're now playing A. Also press down your third finger at the same time and you've got G. Left hand fingers 1, 2 and 3 With the notes B, A and G, you can rock out to "Mary Had A Little Lamb" or even "Hot Cross Buns," and you're well on your way to mastering your first pentatonic scale (more on that later). And guess what? If you press the octave key with your thumb and add it to any of these three fingerings, you can play B, A and G an octave higher as well. There's one more note you can play using just your left hand, and that's C. To play a C, press down your second finger only (the middle finger). Left hand C, finger 2 This fingering for C produces a note in both the mid-range of the horn, and when you press down the octave key, a higher version of the pitch as well. Now that we've got the left hand situated, let's get your right hand in place on the bottom keys of the horn. First, on the back of your horn facing the body there's an upside down hook-type fixture. Like the thumb rest for your left hand, you'll place your thumb inside this hook, which helps position your right hand and hold the horn steady. With the thumb in place, you'll notice three main key pearls in a line on the bottom portion of the saxophone. You'll want to place your right index finger on the top one (we call it the right hand first finger). Your right middle finger (right hand second finger) will go on the middle key, and the ring finger (right hand third finger) will go on the third of these keys. Right hand position Near the crook of your right hand you'll notice a bar with three additional keys. These are called the side keys. In addition, you'll see an extra one or two keys, depending on your saxophone, beneath this bar. These are the side F sharp and high F sharp keys.

Near your right pinky there are two more keys you can press. These control E flat and low C. Right hand side keys Following our additive method, all the notes we'll learn to play with our additional right-hand fingerings will require you to press down all three fingers in your left hand. Left hand fingers 1, 2 and 3 Pressing down the first, second and third fingers of the left hand, add your right hand first finger (index finger) so you are holding down four keys in total. This is the note F. Next add your right hand second (middle) finger so you're holding down five keys to play E. And finally, add your right hand third finger so you're holding down all the keys we have learned so far to produce D. Right



hand fingers 1, 2 and 3As you added fingers in the right hand, you may have noticed the notes getting lower and it becoming a little harder to play these notes. With some extra practice and some breathing tips, you'll get better at producing these lower notes. Watch the video on how to play low notes on the saxophone here: Also try using the same fingerings while pressing the octave key to play the same notes — F, E and D — an octave higher. Octave key We're going to add one more finger in this fingering guide, and that's low C. To play this note, press down all six fingers — the three on your left hand and the three on your right. You'll notice this is the same fingering for the note D we learned earlier. From here, you'll want to go back to those two keys near your pinky, and press down the one farthest away from you, the bottom pinky key.

Right hand with low C key This is the fingering for low C. You'll want to keep in mind everything you learned about playing low notes on the saxophone on this one. You may have noticed we didn't cover any accidentals — sharps or flats — in this fingering guide. We'll get to those fingerings soon, but with these first notes we've just gone over, anyone can play a pentatonic scale, which can be used to play countless melodies and improvise solos. With these plain notes (think of the white keys on the piano), we can play three different pentatonic scales — C, G and F. Watch the video on transposition here: Here's what it looks like on the staff. C major pentatonic scale G major pentatonic scale F major pentatonic scale There's even more good news. Once you can get a good sound (think embouchure and reed set-up, which you can find with the rest of our sax fundamentals) and have these fingerings memorized, you're ready to play some cool things. What kind of cool things? Well, Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" for one.

### Saxophone Fingering Chart

The chart displays fingerings for notes C through F in three registers: soprano (top), alto (middle), and tenor (bottom). Each note is shown on a staff with finger numbers 1-5 and 1-3 for the right hand. The chart includes fingering diagrams for notes C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, and F in each register.

The Temptations used the pentatonic scale for "My Girl." Believe it or not the Rednex used the pentatonic scale for "Cotton Eyed Joe," and great standards such as "Amazing Grace" and "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" all use it too. To get you started, we highly recommend signing up for our Play Sax By Ear Crash Course for free. You can play all the material offered in our great, simple six-video lesson series with the fingerings we just learned. Here's what some BetterSax users have said about trying the course: What are you waiting for?

### E♭ ALTO SAXOPHONE FINGERING CHART

○ = open  
● = pressed down

When more than one fingering is shown, the first is the most commonly used. Additional fingerings, known as "alternate" fingerings, are used in certain situations to allow for better technique.

The chart displays fingerings for notes A♭ through F in three registers: soprano (top), alto (middle), and tenor (bottom). Each note is shown on a staff with finger numbers 1-5 and 1-3 for the right hand. The chart includes fingering diagrams for notes A♭, A, B♭, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, and F in each register.

We can't wait to hear what you'll learn to play first. In fact, let us know how it goes in the comments. That's all for our basic saxophone fingering guide. Get familiar with these basic notes on your horn so you can start rocking out your pentatonic scales and you'll be ready to add more fingerings soon. To help your practice sessions, we've also created a downloadable fingering guide you can view on your iPad or print out to put on your music stand here [link needed]. Let us know how you do in the comments, and don't forget to chime in with any saxophone fingering questions you may have. Happy practicing! Need another fingering chart? Check out "Altissimo Fingerings for Tenor and Alto." Also be sure to follow BetterSax on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube to stay up to date with us for news, giveaways, and other saxophone tips and tricks.