***Lesson 54: Striking in Your Pipes***

Materials

* Set of bagpipes
* Chanter Cap
* Ear plugs

Lesson Summary

* The term ‘strike-in’ or ‘striking in your pipes’ refers to the process of getting the pipes going in a clean, abrupt fashion that is pleasant to the ear. Without striking in, you’ll hear squealing of the drones long before the chanter starts resonating. What we want with the strike-in is a sudden start to the instrument that has as minimal an amount of undesirable sounds as possible.
* Striking in your pipes properly can be tricky, especially if your pipes aren’t set up properly
  + However, if your pipes are well set up, it shouldn’t be too difficult
* **To strike in your pipes successfully, follow these steps:**
  + Fill the bag to the point right before it starts to resonate the drone reeds (around 85-90% full)
  + Place your right hand on the bag, with your left hand grasping the pipe chanter
  + Using the palm of your right hand, or your rigid fingers, abruptly strike the bag as you blow into it
    - You should hear the drones going at this point. If the chanter makes a sound, or the drones cut off, you have struck too hard
  + Continue blowing as you push the bag under your left arm. Be careful not to make a sound with your pipe chanter as you do this
  + Place your right hand on the pipe chanter in the position of whatever note you are going to play
  + Finally, increase the pressure fully to start resonating the whole pipe and commence your performance
* **How to troubleshoot if your strike-in isn't successful:**
  + Change the location you strike the bag.
    - This is probably the easiest and most effective way to get a better strike in, however don’t go crazy with it - if you need to strike the bag all the way in the back or in a strange location to get it to come in properly, there is likely an issue with how the reeds are adjusted in the instrument
  + Adjust the force with which you strike the bag.
    - The force should be firm and abrupt but not excessive
  + Check your drone reeds to make sure they are taking an optimal amount of air (more on this in later lesson)
  + Make sure you are blowing into the bag as you strike it, this will help increase the pressure as you strike and make the strike more effective
* Striking in in a pipe band:
  + To strike in while playing with a pipe band, you will need to complete the strike in within 3 beats of whatever tempo is being played, and sound an E on the third beat after striking your bag
* Striking in for solo competition:
  + You can take as much time as you want to strike in when you’re playing for a solo contest or playing for your own pleasure / practice
* Keep in mind that every instrument is different and not every piper is going to have the same exact strike in