

How to make a Manometer

Pipe Major Brett Tidswell

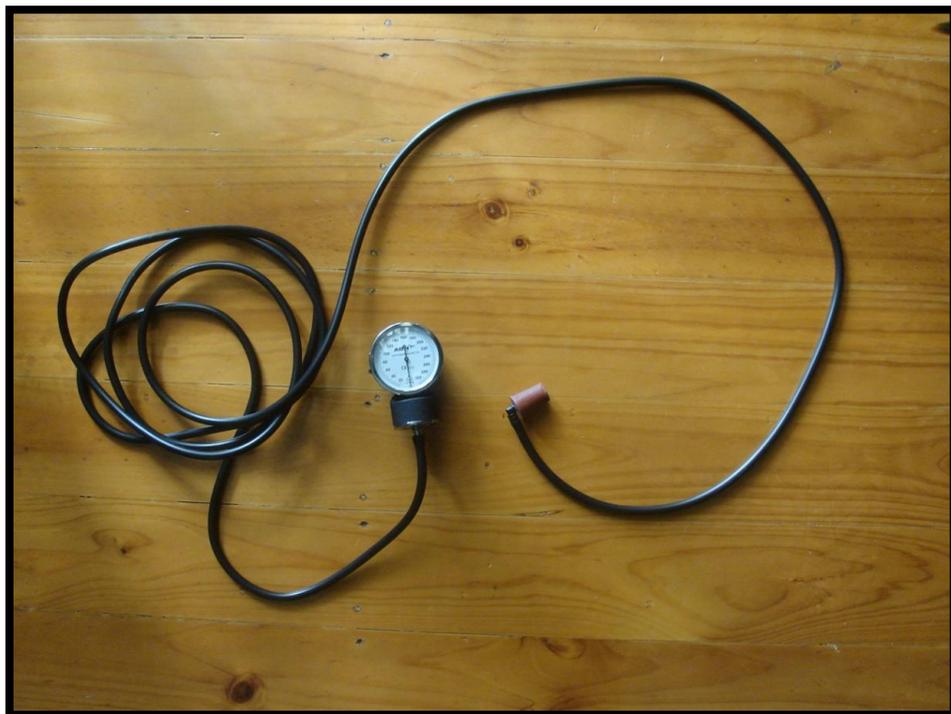
Forget the old water-meter, with a hose running up a board and the water level bouncing away while you try to work out what your instrument is doing. Let's go high tech!

First, let's look at what this is and what it does. A manometer, which seems to be the most commonly used term, is basically something that measures the pressure produced by your bagpipe. Okay, "so what" you might say! Well that can tell us a number of things to help us improve our playing.

- Are you blowing steady with good technique?
- Do you drop pressure or increase pressure as you play?
- Do you vary pressure in some types of tunes? (Harder in faster tunes, softer in slower tunes for example).
- Do you blow harder or softer when tuning compared to playing a tune?
- How hard is your instrument?

All of these things can cause problems with your overall performance and this is a quick and easy way to monitor your performance and resolve some issues by having instant feedback.

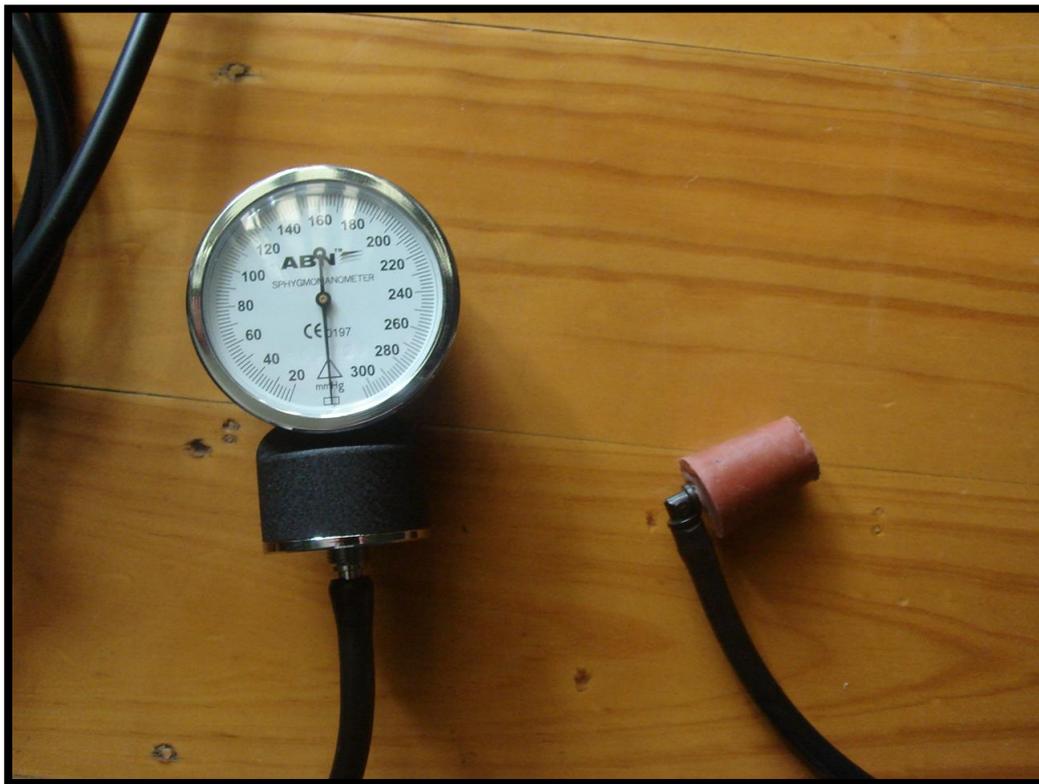
After years of using a water-meter, a doctor that we teach brought several of these to band practice and I think they are brilliant and simple.



All you need are 4 items.

1. A blood pressure gauge.
2. A length of hose.
3. An angle joint.
4. A rubber stopper to fit a drone bush.

The pressure gauges can be expensive, unless of course you have a doctor nearby who plays pipes (there are usually several) and they probably have these sitting around doing nothing. The remaining items are available from a hardware store. A completed manometer can be purchased from the School of Piping Shop.



A good length of hose means you can plug the meter into your drone and support it by the clip on the rear on a music stand or similar and monitor your blowing.



The angle joint fits into the top of the rubber stopper. You have to make a hole through the stopper. It only has to be a very small hole as seen here.

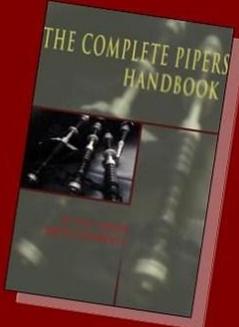
You do not need to take a reed out. Just plug into your drone top and play. This is a most valuable teaching aid and is great to assist pipers of almost any level.

Inexpensive pre-made Bagpipe Gauges such as this one can now be purchased from the School of Piping Shop. They come complete with instructions on blowing and the best way to use the manometer.

http://www.schoolofpiping.com/shop/bagpipes_and_accessories.html

The most comprehensive guide available today for the set up, maintenance and refinement of the Bagpipe is "The Complete Pipers Handbook". Sales of this publication help fund the freely available school of piping website. Copies can be purchased here:

<http://www.schoolofpiping.com/handbook.html>



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