

Pad heights on the saxophone.

I have been noticing repairmen that are putting out list of how high the pad heights should be set on the saxophone.... Well they likely do not know what they are talking about.... there is no set pad height for any brand of saxophone... there is the factory original heights and the heights that make the saxophone play.

Selmer originally set the left hand little finger keys (Low B, B-Flat and C-Sharp) low so the keys worked great.... But when you opened the pad heights so they played great then the keys did not work as well....

Where the pad heights need to be is determined by many things.... The saxophone, the player, the mouthpiece etc.

Pete Christlieb has a very open tenor.... I mean very open.... It does not seem to slow him down at all.....

Palm key heights often need to be adjusted for the player, intonation and mouthpiece. There is for example such a thing as to close. When the pads barely open, often the response of the saxophone seem stuffy.

How high you want your pads to open should be determined by you and your repairman. A good repairman will know a lot about where the pads should be set after he plays the saxophone. This will give you a good place to start.

Also do not start messing with the pad heights too soon after an overhaul. You need to play the saxophone and get use to how it works again and then make some decisions. I often see people make decisions when they first pick up an instrument and really do not know how it plays. People often look at a tuner and try to decide on how they want things to be from that moment. You need to play the instrument with many different reeds, in different rooms and different gigs before making the decision to alter your instrument.

There was a famous teacher at North Texas that tuned his saxophone so it was what he called in tune. Then on the first gig he spent the first hour taking out all the corks he put in the saxophone because no one else was playing in tune and he could not match the other saxes. We never a gig play where the environment is the same, where the players are the same, where our reeds are the same and where our attitudes are the same. There are days and I don't care how good we are we just suck! The beauty in playing is that every gig or performance is different and should be a great experience.