



DOJO UNIVERSITY

Music, not just bagpipes.

Chanter tape is something you may never have thought much about as a piper.

Perhaps your pipe major or tutor loaded up your chanter for you and makes all the adjustments you need, so you don't really need to worry about it too much unless it gets really old and sticky and gross.

But chanter tape plays a pivotal role in bagpipe chanter tuning. And all chanters, regardless of quality, require tape at some point.

So why don't they just make bagpipe chanters that don't need tape?

The answer is a little thing called the laws of physics. No chanter can stay perfectly in tune indefinitely, due to the constant changes in temperature and humidity that come with playing.

And if you think about how sound travels down your chanter, applying tape to the top of a chanter hole essentially changes the length of the air column, thereby flattening the pitch (don't fall for the rookie error of putting tape at the bottom of the chanter – all this might do is make the notes easier for small hands to cover, but it does nothing for tuning!).

Despite the many options available, the kind of tape you use doesn't really matter much... but what does matter a lot is how you maintain it.

If you don't replace your tape regularly – especially if you're playing a lot, or in particularly hot or humid conditions – you'll have to deal with the "gooey mess" interfering with your fingerwork, or worse, slipping down over a hole and causing much bigger issues, like flattening or covering a note entirely mid-performance!

Want to know more about the sticky truths of chanter tape? Check out this week's podcast (link below) for more practical tips, as well as the history of when we started using tape, and what came before...

All the best,
Andrew Douglas
Co-founder
Dojo University