

Suggestions For Good Tone Production On A Brass

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Exercises For Increasing Intake and Increasing Playing Efficiency:

1. **Stretching Exercises:** Begin each day with some slow stretching exercises. The student should work the upper body, especially the torso, shoulders, and the neck. These exercises should be done while breathing slowly and deeply. This will facilitate the stretching process.

2. **Air Sipping:** Take a normal breath. Now aggressively sip in short, breaths until you cannot take in any more air. Exhale. This not only shows the student what their maximum capacity feels like, but it also stretches the muscles surrounding the lungs, allowing them to expand without tightness when taking a normal breath.

3. **Paper Against The Wall:** Hold a piece of paper against the wall. Release the paper while blowing on it, trying to pin it against the wall and keeping it from falling. Take a small step away from the wall and repeat.

4. **The Relaxed Exhale:** This is the essence of all wind playing; a glorified exhale. The closer you can come to recreating this feeling while actually playing, the more air will be converted to sound. Often, too much air is lost in the resistance of upper body tension.

The Breathing Mechanism:

1. **Arms-Above-Head Inhale:** For some reason, the air moves to the right place when your arms are above your head. Use this as a model for correct breathing.

2. **“Breathe Through The Mouth, Not With The Whole Body”:** Try to avoid an upper body spasm when inhaling. Many students jerk their horn upwards and audibly gasp when they breathe.

3. **The “How” Breath:** This has two distinct advantages. First, it opens the throat to receive the air, and; second, it puts the lips in a vibrating position at the end of the exhale.

4. **The Transition Between Inhale And Exhale Is Critical:** Most students lock the air with the throat after the inhale is complete. This forces the student to release both the tongue and the throat while making an entrance, producing the familiar “stutter attack.” Strive to keep the throat open when moving from the inhale to the exhale.

The Embouchure:

1. **The Embouchure:** Compared to the free, relaxed flow of the air, the setting of the embouchure is of secondary importance. Too many students attempt to “make the chops buzz” while playing. Rather, the student should allow the lips to react to or “respond to the air” during the exhale.

2. **The Ratio Between Air Flow And Lip Tension:** The ratio between air flow and lip tension in a balanced sound should be about 85% (Air), to 15% (Lip).

3. **Mouthpiece Placement:** The top of the mouthpiece should rest above the red of the upper lip; the bottom of the mouthpiece should rest below the red of the bottom lip. Mouthpiece placement on the red of the lip (top or bottom) can result in a reduction of flexibility, range, and endurance.

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