

Talking About Breathing

by Richard Murrow

Richard Murrow, Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at Texas Christian University, about the importance of breathing for a musician, particularly wind instrument players, and the role of Powerlung®. Mr. Murrow gave us the following information and comments. (Richard Murrow is the principal tubist with The East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Texas Chamber Orchestra, tubist with The Dallas Wind Symphony and The American Chamber Brass. He is also tuba artist-clinician for C.G. Conn Musical Instruments.)

Richard, what would you say are the most important things Powerlung® can offer musicians to improve their breathing? I believe PowerLung could make the most difference for musicians by (1) Increasing the maximum amount of air that can be exhaled (Vital Capacity); (2) Increasing the relaxation of the breathing muscles so they do not stress and tire as easily or as quickly; and (3) Improving a musician's respiratory flexibility- Flexibility of the thoracic muscles is really important. but you must also be able to stretch the muscles. And, anything that forces a wind player to exhale correctly using the abdominal muscles is very beneficial. I really focus on improvements in exhaling because without it there is no tone; for wind musicians, no tone means no music.

What benefits do you believe Powerlung® has given you to help you improve your breathing? I initially misunderstood Powerlung® because I thought it was going to make my breathing easier each time I take a breath. The muscle strength seems to make the flexibility I need happen more easily. I find I am playing like I did a few years ago.

Since you began using Power-lung® how have you received these benefits? I use my Powerlung® Breather (Yellow) for stretching the muscles. That is very important. I often use it as a breathing warm-up just before I use my Powerlung® Spar! (Blue). I have found the strong resistance available with the Powerlung® Sport helps make my thoracic muscles stronger. The stronger muscles have increased relaxation and flexibility so they respond more easily and with less stress over long playing periods. Plus, it gives me greater capacity. The way Powerlung® is designed, I am focused on exhaling correctly using my abdominal muscles

I know Powerlung® was originally marketed primarily to athletes but it makes sense for musicians too. There really is a high correlation between breathing for wind instrument musicians and some athletes, especially swimmers or endurance athletes -You only have a short time to get in a lot of air!

Breathing is easy. Doing it right is the hard part.

Powerlung®; makes it Easy to Breathe Right. □

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