
GO FOR IT

By now, you're probably saying, "Enough with all the rules and suggestions! Just let me play the dern thing!" And that's just what you should do now and for the next week or two. Mess around with your horn and see what you remember from all your reading. Comeback players: you'll remember a lot! It wouldn't hurt to review this information mid-week to see if you've got it, or if you picked up a bad habit. Find and eradicate any bad habits as soon as you can because the longer you practice a bad habit, the tougher it will be to change.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND OR TO TRY WHILE MESSING AROUND:

- _____ Stay relaxed. Nothing will affect your sound more than the state of your body. A tense body will get tired more quickly and the sound produced by a tense body will also be tense and more difficult to control. Stay loose and relaxed. Be patient with yourself.
- _____ Listen intently. Can you hear how your posture affects your sound?
- _____ Mental checklist. Whenever you think of it, check these things:
 - _____ Finger position: right hand pinky and thumb especially. Curve those three fingers. Relax.
 - _____ Posture: edge of your chair if sitting, open hips if standing, feet shoulder width, string pulling you up, chest out, elbows relaxed and away from your side.
 - _____ Pressure on your lips (the less the better—use just enough pressure to get a good seal)
 - _____ Don't puff out your cheeks.
 - _____ Breathing (from deep in your belly. See "The Ideal Breath" on page 27)
- _____ Take lots of breaks. Rest as much as you play.
- _____ Play one note as long as you can in one breath. Time yourself and try to better your record each practice session. Vary the loudness (record your progress in the tracking chart in the Appendix).
- _____ Make your sound go from loud to soft as smoothly as you can.
- _____ Make your sound go from soft to loud as smoothly as you can.
- _____ Play as low as you can.
- _____ Play as loudly as you can with a good sound. Play as loudly as you can until the sound gets distorted.
- _____ Play as softly as you can.

- _____ Play as high as you can. Be careful here! It's easy to jam the trumpet on your face to play high, but resist the temptation! Play as high as you can without excessive pressure.
- _____ Play from high to low with a continuous sound. This is called a glissando and is difficult for beginners, so use lots of air. Use half valves for a different sound.
- _____ Play from low to high with a continuous sound. This is even more difficult than the previous one.
- _____ Use half valves.
- _____ If you get frustrated or bored, STOP. Give it a rest and pick the horn up later in the day or tomorrow. Research tells us that frequent short practice is *way* better than one long practice session.
- _____ Congratulate yourself, and keep up the work. Talent is practice in disguise.

EXERCISES TO GET YOU ON YOUR WAY

Before we get into the details, there are several things you can begin to work on without knowing much else about the trumpet. Start working on these now and your sound and abilities will improve dramatically.

LONG TONES: A long tone is any note you hold for a full breath. Make the sound as clean and steady as you can. Project your deepest, richest, clearest tone to the edges of the room. Once the note is steady, scan your body to check posture, alignment, hand placement, etc. Relax into the posture. Really listen! By keeping your air flow steady you'll keep the pitch of the note steady. Download the free drone tracks at www.EssentialTrumpetLessons.com.

START AND STOP: Start a note and hold it for a second or two. Stop the note with your air. Start the same note again and see if you can get it to sound immediately without any kacks or sputters or clams. Try it again with a different note. Make the second note different from the first. Check in on posture, grip, etc.

TRILLS: Play an open note (no valves down), then choose one valve to push up and down as fast as you can. Pay close attention to correct right hand position when doing this to get the most speed possible.

LISTEN: Have you listened to some good music today?

FINGER PATTERNS: Coming up in future lesson—starting on "Faster Fingers" on page 41—are finger patterns to practice. Choose one or two easy ones and see if you can play them right now on the horn. Don't worry about the sound, just keep your air moving.

UP NEXT

Breathing is one of the most important skills that affect your sound and ability on trumpet. There are specific techniques that will help you get a great breath so your trumpet sound can be full and present and beautiful. Correct breathing helps tone quality, range, and dynamics. Learn all about breathing in the next lesson.