



ATLANTIC FESTIVALS OF MUSIC

Trumpet Handout 2024

BREATHING

- Breathing should feel natural, and does not require any extra movements or sounds
- Imagine you squeeze a sponge, release it and watch it expand, our lungs work in a very similar way
- Expel all the air from your lungs, release and invite the air in, simply open your mouth and allow the air to enter. (The air will want to move from outside to inside as a result of pressure differences). Continue this feeling as your lungs fill with air. Allow the inhale to be more passive rather than actively trying to get all the air in.
- There must be no pause between inhale and exhale
- I start every practice session with breathing exercises.
 - + Exhale to inhale as naturally as possible, add numbers, 4 in 4 out, 2 in 8 out, 1 in 16 out
 - + Imagine throwing a ball into the air, inhale on the way up, immediately exhale on the way down (our inhale will slow as we reach the top, but it should NOT pause before exhale)
 - + Arms at side, palms up, inhale as raise arms above head, slowly lower arms during exhale

ACTIVATION

- The onset of a sound occurs when the lips begin vibrating, this is achieved with the air - NOT the tongue. Air creates our notes, the tongue can provide clarity and pronunciation
- To begin notes using air, imagine saying the word WHUU (who?), purposefully allowing the air to be heard before the tone.
 - + Try this on your lips, use loose flappy lips or a higher pitch lip buzz. Use a natural breath inhale to exhale and try to get your lips to flap/buzz. Do this several times and gradually try to get the onset of the sound to begin sooner and sooner so the buzz occurs immediately during exhale
 - + Next move to the mouthpiece and do the same, it will take a few tries but speed up your air sooner to get the activation you need
 - *** From here you should buzz in all registers on your mouthpiece, stretch into lower and higher realms through glissandos and sirens. Iron out any areas that feel clunky/resistant until you can smoothly transition between registers. Try and buzz everything you play.
 - + Finally move to the full instrument and use the same WHUU on an easy note
- Here we have the correct use of air to create a tone, this has also brought the lips closer together.
- Advanced students should add a step before regular articulation. Start your note with a poo, breath in, close your lips, and try to get some pop at the beginning of your air attack using “p” sounds. NO TONGUE (wUU, pUU, tUU) This will place the lips in a forward position.
- Finally we add a tiny pronunciation with a t or d, to begin standard onset of notes/tone.

FLEXIBILITY

- Flexibility, or the ability to freely move around the instrument, is the most important skill to further your success. Lip Slurs are the best way to work on flexibility, and are excellent warm-ups.
- Lip Slurs are when we slur between notes on the same fingerings, contrary to the name we should focus on our air first and allow the lips to respond rather than focus on what our lips are doing. Never even think about pinching your lips.
- **Bai Lin - Lip Flexibilities** is a excellent resource for furthering your lip slurs, you can also create your own exercises moving around the instrument using the same fingering
- You should be able to slur everything you play, especially tongued passages
- If you can play it tongued but not slurred than you are not using the proper air support, and should spend more time working on your flexibility

ARTICULATION

- Related to onset, the key to articulation is air. We all have heard to not huff and puff at notes - use your tongue - keep the air flowing. Yet, I hear many students that start and stop the air with their tongue, having the same effect as huffing and puffing.
- Always keep a continuous air stream
- Move your tongue up through the bottom of the air stream and lightly touch somewhere behind the teeth, quickly return to a neutral position.
- Say tA, tA, tA, now try dA, dA, dA notice where your tongue touches when you say these words, this is the same movement your tongue should do while you blow air through the instrument to articulate
- “TUT” or “DIT” are what I hear students do most often. They articulate the start of the note and chop the end with the tongue and then try to start the next note. This causes a pause in the air stream, and we reactivate the airflow and buzz each and every time. This is so much more tiring, and so much harder to do. Leaping passages become near impossible to maintain consistency.
 - + Work on lightening up your tongue, try using a da/de sound, for very legato use la/lu
 - + Imagine playing a long tone, then simply move your tongue
- I find staccato to be the #1 killer of air and proper articulation habits in trumpet players.
- Band teachers, do you want the notes Stravinsky short? Do you want lots of decay between the notes? Do you really want them separated or are you just looking for clarity? Perhaps the section is just not playing together?

POSTURE

- Posture should not be rigid, proper positions are very important, but you should be able to relax, and not be stiff as a board. This applies to hands, elbows (let them hang), back, head, etc.
- Instrument angle is impacted by many things including, teeth structure, lips/embouchure, jaw opening
- Sometimes we need a reminder “Bells UP!” but with proper music stand placement, and height, our bell will find a natural position that will be the best for us. It is exceedingly rare for a trumpet bell to be exactly 90 degrees naturally
- The bell of your trumpet should never be directed into a stand/chair

HIGH NOTES

There are 3 elements that we use for high notes; fast air, tongue arch, air stream. Most young players will only use one of these elements when trying to higher, but you should use them all. These elements have to all work together.

1. Fast Air (not more air...)

- The higher the note the faster the air needs to be. Imagine a candle across the room and you are going to blow it from right where you are. You will naturally take a full breath and propel the air out quickly towards the candle. Practice slow to fast air without an instrument as air pattern. Hold a piece of paper about 1 foot from face, slow air paper starts to move, faster air hit the paper, accelerate the air. Try this exercise again with the mouthpiece, just air, move the paper to within 6 inches.

2. Tongue Arch

- OOH low, AH middle/neutral, EE high position, Higher note higher tongue position. Try it by whistling, OOH EE, AH EE is very similar to lip slurring

3. Air Stream/Aperture

- Low notes naturally use a larger aperture, higher notes require a smaller aperture, however it is very difficult to think about controlling the aperture without causing biting/vertical tension. Imagine low notes as a pencil, and high notes as spaghetti. Big airstream - target air at palm of hand and fill the hand with air. Small airstream, pinpoint a small target in the middle. Practice transitioning gradually between the two air streams. The sounds of the air streams will sound different, the volume of air will feel different on palm.