

APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES PER INSTRUMENT

ALL:

PRACTICE URGENTLY! IF YOU WANT TO GET BETTER AND YOU ACT UPON THAT DESIRE, THEN YOU WILL! MAINTAIN THE INSTRUMENT! Tighten loose screws, lubricate slides, report breakages, etc. **Percussion too!!!!** SUPPORT = Breathing for focused AIR and using good POSTURE. Your throat and face are just tubes that air passes through, the diaphragm is the engine of the air. **BREATHE!!!** Try [Breathing Gym!](#)

Always practice THOUGHTFULLY:

- Practice space should allow you to FOCUS (no distractions, armless chair, stand, metronome, etc).
- Little bits at the time, small amounts each day. DON'T CRAM!
- Practice what is hard for you, not what is easy.
- Speed kills: Practice slowly for accuracy.
- Don't just practice where you FELL, practice where you TRIPPED as well.
- Don't practice until you get it right, practice until you can't get it wrong.

Practice in front of a mirror occasionally:

- Check for excess movement/weird stuff
- FIRM embouchure muscles, not TIGHT muscles (no pinching/biting)
- POSTURE! At least attempt to look like you know what you're doing!
- Look like the pictures in the method books

BREATHE!!! Swallow a basketball down to your toes...**NO WIMPY BREATHS!!!**

Don't lose contact with the instrument when breathing and breathe with the tempo.

Use scales to help extend range and with quick runs

Snappy fingers and AIR on runs, trills, and turns

Practice runs SLOWLY with different rhythms (dotted eighth-sixteenth, sixteenth-dotted eighth, triplets, etc.)

Listen to professional recordings (see below)....try to sound like them!

Flute: Listen to [JAMES GALWAY](#)

Lower lip covers 1/3 of tone hole. Flute should be parallel to the floor when playing.

Play G, A, and B clearly with just left hand to check chin pressure

Check cork position regularly with the cleaning rod and check for LOOSE SCREWS!

"Ride the Line" - Always play just to the point of jumping up to the next partial (**AIR!**)

3rd line Bb is played with thumb on the ball, not bar and no right hand, first finger

Experiment with putting right hand fingers down on C above staff starting with ring finger (for pitch).

Headjoint alone = A on tuner if you use correct support.

Adjust pitch: roll flute toward you if flat, away if sharp, then adjust the head joint appropriately when possible

Oboe: Listen to [JOHN MACK](#), [ALLAN VOGEL](#)

NEVER have just one reed ready and don't over play new reeds (5 mins. day 1, 15 mins. day 2, etc.)

Preferred reed brands: Emerald, Lescher or homemade Hodge products

Corners of the mouth create soft cushion for reeds

Lips placed at the heart of the reed

Reed alone (crow) = concert C octaves on tuner

Never pull reed out/push in to adjust pitch

Oboe bell is held higher than clarinet (extension of your nose)

Use left index finger to help apply light pressure to lower lip to raise pitch when needed

CLARINET, SAXES, BRASS, AND PERCUSSION ON REVERSE...

Clarinet: Listen to [CHARLES NEIDICH](#), [LARRY COMBS](#)

NEVER have just one reed ready and don't over play new reeds (5 mins. day 1, 15 mins. day 2, etc.)

DO NOT rest the bell on your knees or hold the bell with your legs!

3.5 strength reed (Vandoren) requires FIRM embouchure. No pinching/biting. Bad reed = any brand ending in letter "o"

Move reed slightly to one side of the mouthpiece to find your best sound if needed (doesn't need to be in center)

Point chin down (flat front), head up! Firm corners pointing downward. Tip of tongue to tip of the reed

Mouthpiece & barrel = concert F# on a tuner if you use proper pressure/support (Bass clar. = F)

Top lip flexes on softs, relaxed when loud, but is ALWAYS firm

Move bottom jaw forward in upper registers (clarion and altissimo) to avoid "grunts" or "ghost notes" **FAST AIR!!!!**

If you can play the upper registers without the register key, then with it, the tone will stay centered

Right hand down on G, G#/Ab, A, Bb in the staff WHEN POSSIBLE (not on fast stuff). Check for LOOSE SCREWS!

Saxes: Listen to [MARCEL MULE](#), [EUGENE ROUSSEAU](#), GEORGE WOLFE

NEVER have just one reed ready and don't over play new reeds (5 mins. day 1, 15 mins. day 2, etc.)

Use Vandoren reeds. Selmer C-Star mouthpiece is recommended. Always check for LOOSE SCREWS!

Move reed slightly to one side of the mouthpiece to find your best sound if needed (doesn't need to be in center)

Mouthpiece should come almost straight out of the mouth with a slight downward angle

Play with just the mouthpiece using a tuner. If you're using correct pressure/support, the tuner should read:

- Alto: concert A (siren up to F# and back)
- Tenor: concert E (siren up to C# and back)
- Bari: concert Bb (siren up to G and back)

Altos put right hand down on C# AND palm keys to lower that note! (Not all fingers....experiment with this)

Brass:

AIR!!!! AIR!!!! AIR!!!! DON'T PRESS HARD AGAINST MOUTHPIECE! Just enough to make a seal.

Mirror check: Too much pressure on one lip than the other or in general? Do you look strained?

Buzz with just the mouthpiece...keep one in the car? Always buzz STRONG! Consider buying a B.E.R.P.

Pitch on certain notes and higher partials gets interesting. See below...

Pitch for 3-valve insts: 1+2=a little sharp, 2+3=moderately flat, 1+3=very sharp, ALL=crazy sharp

Trumpet: 1st and 3rd valve slides are there for a reason...**use them! (see above)** Listen to [WYNTON MARSALIS](#)

Trombone: Your main tuning slide is in front of you. Listen to [JOSEPH ALESSI](#), [CHRISTIAN LINDBERG](#)

Horn: Right hand lays in bottom half of bell (straight w/fingers together), used to adjust pitch. Listen: [JOHN CERMINARO](#)

Baritone/Tuba: Listen to [WALTER HILGERS](#)

Percussion: [CLICK HERE!!!](#)

All hand-held percussion should be held **UP!** It **IS** possible to play a percussion inst. with bad tone quality!

All motion comes from the wrists and they must move fluidly. Nothing should be tense. **Relaxed control** is the goal.

All fingers gently hold a stick for control. Thumb and first finger form the fulcrum 1 inch behind a stick's balance point.

We live and die by white electrical tape....