

## Clinical Notes on Trumpet Playing

Dustin Shrum

# Sound

For music to be effective one must **ALWAYS** play with a good sound. Any less and it will cease to be music.

### Long Tone Exercise No. 1



Continue upward: D,E,F#,G#,A#,C

Then downward: B,A,G,F,Eb,Db,C

Then down chromatically to F#.

Play each exercise twice.

**Rest as much as you play.**

See **Appendix A** for full exercise.

For a trumpet player to play with a good sound one must excel in four areas:  
**Relaxation, Flow, Intonation, and Articulation.**

## Relaxation

- Tension Kills Tone!!!
- Physical Tension Creators
  - Poor Diet
  - Lack of Exercise
  - Lack of Sleep
  - Excessive movement while playing
- Mental Tension Creators
  - Lack of Confidence
  - Lack of Focus
  - Poor Stress Management Skills

With the exception of lack of sleep, physical tension creators are only avoidable by being self-disciplined and self-motivated.

Meditating for as little as **one minute** can help get rid of mental tension creators.

### How do I meditate?

The easiest way to meditate while practicing is to sit (without your instrument) with good posture, **rest** your hands on your lap or at your side, close your eyes, and take deep yet relaxed breaths. Your brain will start to wander, but don't let it! Focus **only** on what is happening **right here** and **right now**. Listen to the sounds around you. Try and see if you can feel a point on your body that might be harboring tension and then focus on freeing it.

After meditating you will be focused, relaxed, and ready to complete your goals you have set for today's practice session.



## SING

If you can sing it, you can buzz it on your mouthpiece.

## BUZZ

If you can buzz it on your mouthpiece, you can play it on your horn.

## PLAY

Having a good ear is crucial for brass playing. Once you have the music in your ear, all it takes is a mixture of relaxation, flow, intonation, articulation, and confidence.

### Pro Intonation Tip

Music is physics. The pitches we create with our instruments vibrate in the air around us. Because we play on well-tempered instruments, we can create overtone series while playing. The goal is to try to have overtones ringing sympathetically in the air while playing.

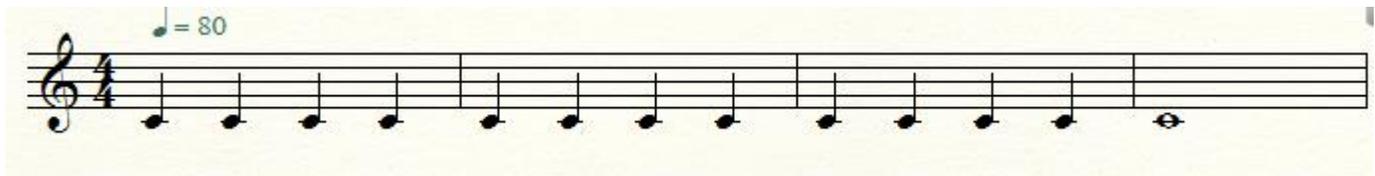
### How do I hear the overtones?

Play “Long Tone Exercise No. 1”. Bend the very last note down and slow back up. There will be a point while your bending back up where you will notice an annoying buzz in your hear, or a faint hum happening in the air. Try to find that point and sit right on it (if you think you need to move your tuning slide to easier reach this point, then **DO IT!**) When I practice this, I like to think of that faint hum as a sound that is taking up every bit of air and is vacuum sealing the space around me with sound.

Obtaining a sound that is rich with overtones will result in a fuller sound, thus giving you the opportunity to not have to play as loud or as hard to make your sound project out to your audience.

## Articulation

### Long Tone Exercise No. 2



Similar to intonation, articulation is a factor that promotes CLEANLINESS in the sound.

Play “Long Tone Exercise No. 2”. Focus on keeping the tongue forward in the mouth, with the back of the tongue lifted. Try to make the tongue emulate the shape of a slide in a park. With the tongue positioned this way, the tip of the tongue will always be ready to make its quick ascension to make contact with the back of your top two front teeth. Try to aim for one focused spot on the back of those teeth and hit that spot every time.

## **Pro Articulation Tip**

Imagine yourself driving down a long straight stretch of highway. As you drive you pass up hundreds of mile markers. It is important to realize that these mile markers do not interrupt the road, they are simply there.

The stream of air is the highway and the articulation is the mile marker. The tongue should not interrupt the air, it should simply be present.

This means the tongue must be swift, **laziness will result in poor articulation**. The tongue is one of the strongest muscles in the body, it can handle moving quickly.

When playing smoothly (as in “Long Tone Exercise No. 2) think about the end of one note becoming the beginning of the next note; this perception will further aid in creating a clear articulation.

## **Method Resources**

- Arban’s “Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet”
- H. L. Clarke “Technical Studies for Trumpet”
- Claude Gordon “Daily Trumpet Routines”
- Max Schlossberg “Daily Drills and Technical Studies for Trumpet”
- Bobby Shew “Exercises and Etudes: for both jazz and classical trumpet players”

## **Material Resources**

- **Trumpet**
  - Bach, Yamaha, Shilke, Jupiter, Benge, P. Mauriat, Shires, Warburton, Besson, Calicchio, Blackburn, King, Martin, F. Schmidt, Monette, Schagerl, Stomvi, and Conn-Selmer
- **Flügelhorn**
  - Couesnon, Yamaha, Kanstul, Besson, Jupiter, Warburton, and Getzen
- **Mouthpiece**
  - Bach, Yamaha, Schilke, Warburton, B&S, and Monette
- **Mutes**
  - Straight mute, cup mute, harmon mute, plunger mute, bucket mute, pixie mute, and solotone mute.
- **Trumpet stands**
- **Trumpet cases**
- **Cleaning/Maintenance**
  - Trumpet Snake, valve casing brush, valve oil, and slide grease
- **Pencils**
- **Music Stand Light**

# APPENDIX A

$\text{♩} = 80$

1

9

9

17

17

25

25

33

33

41

41

49

49

57

57

65

65

73

73

APPENDIX B

