

Trumpet Solo Class Lecture #32

“What to Consider When Warming-up”

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It is very important to establish a consistent warm-up routine that is followed and monitored each day. Once you have developed the plan and a schedule in which to address your routine, it is then appropriate to focus your attention on each element that you are playing during the course of the routine. Playing through several elements blindly will not help to develop skills and technique; rather it is more likely that a lack of clarity and control will result.

Breathing - This is the first and most important aspect of brass playing. Inhale and exhale fully in order to activate the muscles of the breathing mechanism. It is important to breathe aggressively in the warm-up to promote active air support while playing. I recommend using a breathing tube for these exercises.

Mouthpiece Buzzing - Connect each pitch by creating a glissando from one note to the next. Use a very active air stream and pay careful attention to pitch accuracy and intonation.

Long Tones - Inhale by taking a full and relaxed breath. Play softly with a well-focused tone and carefully control the pitch center. Play each line in one breath and eventually slow the tempo down to extend your control and air capacity.

Lip Flexibility - Moving from one pitch to another can be assisted by the position of the tongue. The tongue position helps control the air speed, such as “ahh” for slower air (lower notes) and “eee” for faster air (higher notes). Think of these patterns as tongue position exercises.

Range Expansion - All of the previous elements must be well coordinated in order to produce a centered/supported sound in the upper register. Support the air aggressively and be very aware of the position of the tongue.

Air Attacks - Clear articulation is the result of immediate support from the breathing mechanism. The tongue does not start the note; it shapes the sound. The abdominal muscles must be active in order to produce a clean and immediate tone. Think of the sound “puu” as you play these patterns.

Range Development - Higher pitches are the result of faster air, not a greater volume of air. Play these patterns softly at first and gradually slow the tempo down for greater control. Think of going into the upper register as a stretching exercise for your abdominal muscles.

Articulation - The tongue shapes the sounds as it interrupts the supported air stream. Your support mechanism should be constant and even. Use a variety of articulation styles and patterns. Start slowly and focus on the clarity of the articulation.

Technical Articulation - These patterns combine finger technique with articulation. Keep the fingers firm and work on tongue/finger coordination. Start slowly and increase the tempo over time.

Repeated Articulation - Developing an even clarity throughout the playable range of the instrument is very important. These patterns combine speed, articulation and range. Concentrate on matching the shape of every pitch.

Technical Studies - I refer to the patterns by Clarke and Vizzutti because they work extremely well. Incorporate one of these exercises into your routine every day. Concentrate on rhythmic evenness and clarity.

Lip Flexibility - Concentrate on the position of the tongue. Keep the air stream well supported and create a sense of direction to the final note of each pattern. These patterns will help energize the embouchure.

Technique - Learn each of these patterns in every key. Spend more time in the keys that are more difficult. Vary the articulation and extend the patterns into the extreme ranges of the trumpet.

Pedal Tones - Keep the sound focused and use the regular fingerings for the pedal notes. Keep the embouchure firm and slow the air stream down in order to reach the lowest pitches.

Elements to Consider;

Have a clear sense of your goals for each practice session.

Work with a metronome, tuner and mirror each time that you practice.

Monitor your materials and progress each day.

Re-evaluate the elements that you incorporate on a regular basis.

Vary the dynamics and articulation in several exercises each session.

Play each of the instruments at your disposal every day.

Challenge yourself to improve.

Protect your practice time from distractions.