



Developing a Daily Routine

Why You Can't Live Without It!!

J.D. Salas, Instructor of Tuba-Euphonium Studies

Stephen F. Austin State University

Every profession in the world follows some daily routine in order to achieve success.

3 Parts to Create an Efficient Routine

- Warm-Up
- Routine
- Fundamentals

Warm-Up

A proper warm-up is the first step in achieving a productive practice session. It will not only prepare the lip muscles and lungs for playing but you should also use this process to prepare yourself mentally for practice. You must not “just go through the motions” but focus on your warm-up.

- Proper Tools
A **metronome & tuner** are the most important tools that any musician can possess. It is my honest opinion that practicing without these tools is in part a waste of time that will create bad habits that will only cause great detriment to a musician.
- Breathing Exercises
You must remain completely relaxed when performing breathing exercises, because this is the first step in eliminating tension from your playing. A metronome **must** be used to help you reinforce your internal pulse and always have a goal for your breathing. Visualize the air flow start to create a mental image of how you want your tone to sound
- Mouthpiece Buzzing
A clear open fundamental pitch is the only way that mouthpiece buzzing will help you excel. Always be careful not to create tension in the embouchure and always use a keyboard or piano to help you match pitch and build your intonation skills.

- Long Tone Exercises
ALWAYS PLAY WITH A TUNER!!!!
 You must think of these exercises as a culmination of both the breathing exercises & mouthpiece buzzing. You must concentrate on getting the fullest sound possible without creating a “forced” sound. Use the tuner to ensure that your intonation does not change as you sustain the notes.

Routine

- Air Flow Studies
 These exercises will help you create a seamless transition through each note. Always blow through each note to the end of the phrase and concentrate on keeping your tone even throughout the register and focus on intonation.
- Flexibility Studies (Lip Slurs)
 These studies are one of the most important and sadly one of least employed by young players. When working on these you must relax and let the air work for you. Start slowly and focus on how much air pressure is needed to get to the next partial and gradually speed up the process. Always strive to expand your ability
- Range Exercises
 The only way to increase your range is to practice playing in the upper register. Using scales and arpeggios and gradually ascending to the next octave, be careful not to let tension & mouthpiece pressure create a tight “forced” sound. You must use a focused air stream and always push yourself but know your limitations

Fundamentals

- Scales
 They are the “building blocks” of music and **must** be a part of your practice routine. Do not just focus on the “easy keys”..there are more keys than Bb, Eb, and F!!
- Tonguing & Articulation
 The more you focus on tonguing & articulation the less problems you’ll have when working on music. There are many great method books such as the “Arbans Book” & Blazhevich etudes to help you excel.

Create Your Daily Routine Book

Start compiling exercises for your daily routine that you can alternate in order to avoid getting bored and losing focus. This book can even include excerpts of solo literature and etudes.