

How To Practice Efficiently – and learn something too!

By Pat Stuckemeyer

Prepare

Always go into a practice session with a **goal**. If you have a goal in mind, your practice session will be more concise and more productive.

Pre Warm-up

Stretch before you begin your daily routine of warming up. You need to prepare your body for the physical exercise you are about to do, just as you would stretch your legs before you would go running!

Warm-up

The warm up is essential to a productive practice session, and also can contribute to the overall picture of your progress throughout the day. The worst thing that you can do is rush through the warm-up. Here is my daily routine:

- o Breathing Exercises – nice deep breaths, concentrate on the deep inhale.
- o Mouthpiece Whistling – if you have a round embouchure, you can make the mouthpiece whistle.
- o Mouthpiece Playing – off of the horn, practice your slurs over the entire range of your “buzz.”
- o Chromatic Slides – using the first five notes of a descending chromatic scale, start on F3, and go down to the deep pedal range. Return to F3, and go up into the stratosphere.

Developing the “sound”

Using the tone cloning section of the Arban book (first studies), concentrate on getting an even sound in **all aspects of the note!**

BREATH-ATTACK-SOUND-CLARITY-DYNAMIC-RELEASE-AFTER Technical Aspects of Life

Developing technique is **essential** to developing yourself as an all around brass player. Proficient

and **clean** technical ability is not hard to learn, but requires diligent work at slow tempos!

- o Practice your **scales** and **arpeggios** daily!
- o Develop your technical ability in your scales modally. Using the Arban book, practice the scale studies section in both major and minor! You must be proficient at both!
- o Remember – clean technique is not learned, it is earned!
- o Anyone can play technically – a great sound is just as important as flashy technique!

The “big picture”

When you begin a new piece of music, remember the fundamentals that you practice everyday. You will start to pick up new music quicker than before, and you will be able to play things with a better, cleaner sound.

Remember

- o Good technique is **earned**, not learned!
- o If you skimp on your warm-up, it could mess up your whole playing day!
- o Strength in the high range is developed with strength in the low range!
- o Above all – breathing is the most important thing that we do on the instrument!
- o Care for your instrument – look after it! Clean it and take care of its maintenance! If you care for it, it will care for you!
- o Remember that music is fun, and you should **always have fun making music!**