

Chop Wood, Haul Water

A Daily Trombone Warmup
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In frontier days, each person had to chop wood and haul fresh water daily to survive. Fires provided heat for shelter and cooking, and water provided hydration and cleanliness.

What is our modern equivalent of "Chop Wood, Haul Water" as a musician?

These exercises are a good start!

You have something important to say on the trombone. Doing this work will keep your tools in good repair, so that when the opportunity arises, you're ready to speak clearly, confidently, and boldly.

Now go get 'em.

Play at a comfortable volume and tempo. Minimize judgement, and focus on stringing beautiful individual notes into intentional phrases. Take a moment to think about what you want to sound like, and release that into the instrument. Some days, I use only the open horn, and other days, I incorporate the valve.

If your chops feel less than your best, take time between each phrase.

FLOW #1

The musical notation for FLOW #1 consists of four staves of music in bass clef. The first three staves each contain two phrases of music, with a comma indicating a breath or rest between them. The first phrase of each staff is a descending line of notes, and the second phrase is an ascending line. The fourth staff contains a single phrase of music that is a continuation of the ascending line from the previous staff, ending with a double bar line.

As you move through these exercises, take note of tension in your body. In my experience, tension creeps in when exercises become more difficult. Study the patterns, and mark whatever needs to be marked. Eventually, these exercises should be internalized so that you can play them without music.

If you need to flip #1 and #2, that's fine. There are many great flow studies from James Stamp, Vincent Cichowicz, Brass Gym, and others. These are a starting point!

Flow #2

For #3, don't let your judgement of your low register sounds get in the way of the development of your low register! For the half notes at the end of each phrase, remember to add at least half a position of slide length when playing on the valve. For low B (Cb) fake it!

If you can only play the first 2 measures at first, great! Add phrases slowly. It is better to do less in a thoughtful manner than to mindlessly play every note.

Flow #3 - wider, slower air!

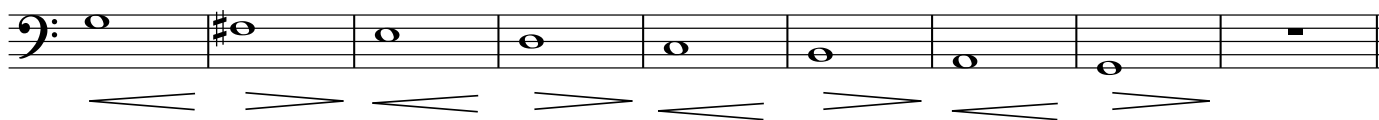
One of the best ways to ensure improvement is to remove as many excuses as possible. Too often I hear that a student doesn't have time for scale practice or that they have to choose between one exercise or another. By combining long tones with scale practice, a few things are accomplished at once. Students will practice their scales slowly and accurately, and by choosing a different scale, direction, and articulation pattern each day, boredom can be avoided!

Scales are the DNA of Western music. The best players take the time to learn these well.

Slowly. Take your time!



Try different articulations and note shapes. Hairpins are great!!!!



Don't forget minor scales!!!



A few scale tips:

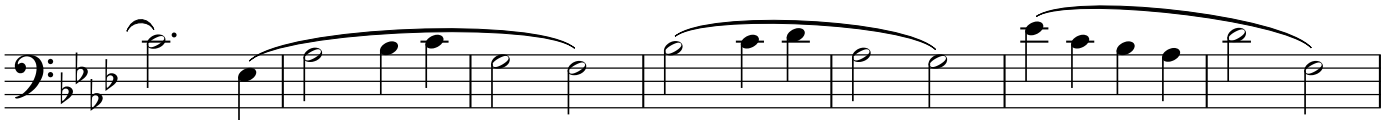
1. Metronomes or drum beats help keep time honest and help coordinate the breath.
2. Tuners and drones are great reference tools, but don't play with them every time.
3. Keep your half steps together! The A# in B major should be played in fifth, so you can resolve up one position on the same partial.

A few long tone tips:

1. Long tones should be played slowly, but not so slowly that you add tension.
 2. Your inhale and exhale should touch each other with no stall between.
 3. Control is important, but your chops shouldn't be overly flexed or pinched.
- Aim for a resonant sound!

Check in with your music making here. This is the first of the Cimera Phrasing Studies, a favorite in my studio. I want musicians who play trombone, not trombone operators who only think about technique for technique's sake. When this is completed, put your instrument down, and go get a drink of water or walk around the room a bit. Take your phone off of airplane mode or Do Not Disturb mode, and check your messages.

Free and easy. Bring what you've practiced into a performance, now.



Try it in a different key/clef!



Single position "bugle" slurs should be an essential element of your daily routine. Slow slurs and fast slurs cover different skill areas, so don't forget to both! There entire books dedicated to this subject - check out "Lip Slurs" by Brad Edwards for an entire collection of patterns to explore.

Slow Slur Examples - play all seven positions!

etc. to 7th



etc. to 7th



etc. to 7th



etc. to 7th



Faster slurs - if they stick or don't speak, gliss/buzz them on the mouthpiece!

etc. to 7th



etc. to 7th



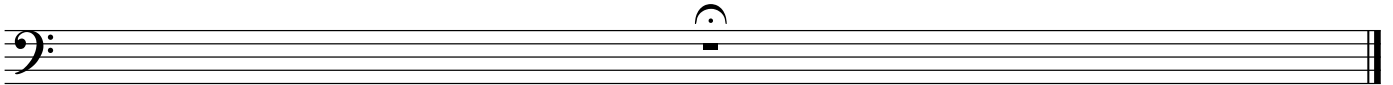
etc. to 7th



At this point, you have a choice to make. You can dive into other work - articulation exercises in Arban would be great, or perhaps legato work in Bordogni Vocalises. If you choose to continue, take a few minutes now to sip some water and rest.

Rest is an essential part of work. Rest is good for the body and the mind.

If you run yourself down to a tangled mess of nerves, not only will your playing suffer, but you will likely be in a bad mood for the day. Who wants that?



10 minutes rest!

Here is a good sample of Arban exercises you can check in with day to day. Play different exercises - keep your playing diet healthy through variety! Play one or two from each section below.

Use a metronome, aim for consistency!

Page 17, beginning with #11 through #27.

Page 27, Intervals beginning with #47 through #50.

Page 32, Etudes 13-18 on dotted rhythms. Are you TRULY playing dotted 8th/16ths?

Page 35, #19-38 are my favorite in the book. Try setting the met and playing the set!!!

Page 43, Slurs #1-16. Blow through the bottom note to the top note!!!

Page 88, Chromatics. Want to improve pitch accuracy and slide technique? Bingo!

Page 138, Intervals #1 and #2. Don't move on until you can play these well.

Congrats! You are ready for pretty much anything the playing day can throw at you.

Want to maximize your efficiency? Do 4 more sessions today lasting 30 minutes each.

It works!