

ODDS AND ENDS

- "Technique" is primarily how you do something, not just how fast you do something.
- Find places to play with, hear, meet and study with musicians who create/perform music the way you'd someday like to.
- Soft music should have the same intensity as music played loudly, only it should sound very far away.
- Listen more closely to the sounds around you than forcing your sound on everyone around you. A variation on this idea: seek to understand, then seek to be understood.
- Seemingly complicated tasks often turn out to be a series of simple tasks.
- Practice in order to make playing music on your instrument easier and more natural. Strive for the simple solutions, they tend to "stick" better.
- Your tongue should ride a continuous flow of air.
- LET the music happen when you play. Consider yourself a free-flowing conduit for Music, not necessarily some vessel containing some mysterious untapped "source" of that music.
- Remember to practice "simple" things with a commitment to their performance, not just as a part of your "warm up".
- Great players are easily identified by one or two notes.
- Practice listening. Listen for the "inside" sounds. Listen to bass lines, counter melodies, percussion parts etc, etc. How does it all fit together? Sing what you hear, write things down occasionally. Commit to always being a better listener--this skill might save your life one day; musically and/or otherwise!
- Play this little game every day:
Hear it--->Sing it--->Buzz it---->Play it
- Play relaxed. Let tension go. Take inventory of tension every 15 minutes of every practice session. TAKE BREAKS!! Think of breaks as a part of your routine. Your body needs to re-boot once in a while! "Breathe" your way into a more relaxed state.
- "Perform" when you practice. Imagine yourself performing every note for a critical audience. Tape record yourself occasionally to create this environment.
- Developing skills as a brass instrumentalist is more about developing co-ordination than just building strength. Endurance is a combination of co-ordination and strength.

- Airflow is mainly constant from register to register. The direction and the volume of that airstream are the most important ways the air changes in and out of each register.
- Play everything with a sense of time, even rubato.
- Warm air and cool air each has its own place in music.
- The note starts in the air and lips, not the tongue. The tongue is the time-keeper.
- Project sound/music at all times, and at all dynamics.
- Your breath when you play should approximate your breath when you are NOT playing.
- Play everything with "IN-tention", not "in TENSION"!
- Blow THROUGH every note, not just FROM note to note.
- Strive to communicate something in a group of notes [phrases], tell stories in sound.
- Be curious. Try new musical ideas for the heck of it. Switch an etude into different keys/clefs. Shift your warm ups and scale practice an eighth note earlier/later. Does "stacatto" in a Brahms Symphony mean the same thing as "stacatto" in a Sammy Nestico big band chart? Don't be afraid to ask "why?", "what if" and "why NOT"?
- On unison passages, listen more closely to your neighbors than to yourself.
- Be a time-keeper. Don't totally rely on conductors, metronomes and rhythm sections. Be more PRO-ACTIVE with time, less RE-ACTIVE.
- Be in the flow of the music even when you are not playing at a given time in a piece. Consider yourself as a part of the musical flow even when you are not playing, the more into that flow you will be when you do play. Trombone sections are often late because they are not IN the music coming out of rests. Be your own "rhythm section".
- Music is a language. Scales and chords are its vocabulary. Melodies are its sentences. Great pieces of music are prose and literature.