

Free Sample Pages:

Brad Edwards

First Habits

Bass Trombone



More than a Warm-Up



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Brad Edwards



First Habits

Version: 05/2021

Bass Trombone

More than a warm-up



Introduction

I have wanted to write a warm-up fundamentals book for a long time. I've sketched exercises for as long as I've been teaching. Frankly, I've been afraid to write such a book because: (1) I keep revising my own warm-up and (2) I may think of other fundamentals exercises that should have been included. That's why you see a version date under the title. That's the latest version of this book. The first version dates from May, 2021. Those who purchase this book will be, upon request, eligible for free downloads of the revised versions should they occur.

This book is long enough that a printed version is impractical. If you wish to have a paper copy, I suggest you print and bind the needed pages. Most print shops offer inexpensive binding. As always, please don't distribute copies of this. It represents years of work.

For portions of this book, I have created play-along tracks which I share on my website: TromboneZone.org. You are welcome to download them. Small portions of this book are adapted from some of my other books such as *Trombone Craft* or *The Intermediate Trombonist*.

This book falls into four large sections:

- Part One: First Habits Warm-Up
- Part Two: Warm-Up Variations
- Part Three: Focus Areas
- Part Four: Love Songs and Pirate Songs

The First Habits Warm-Up proceeds through the following categories of playing:

1. Air/Buzz
2. Easy Resonance
3. Five Notes Down
4. First Slurs
5. Range Stretch
6. Note Placement
7. Musical Patterns

How to get around in this book:

If you are using this book on a screen (tablet or computer), you can leap **from** the table of contents to the page numbers shown. You can also leap **back to** the table of contents to various sections.

Whenever you see the book logo, you can click on it to return to the table of contents.



**Please note: embedded links
don't work in the free sample.**

What's the key first habit?
Playing with a resonant sound and musical direction.
Everything we do should support that!

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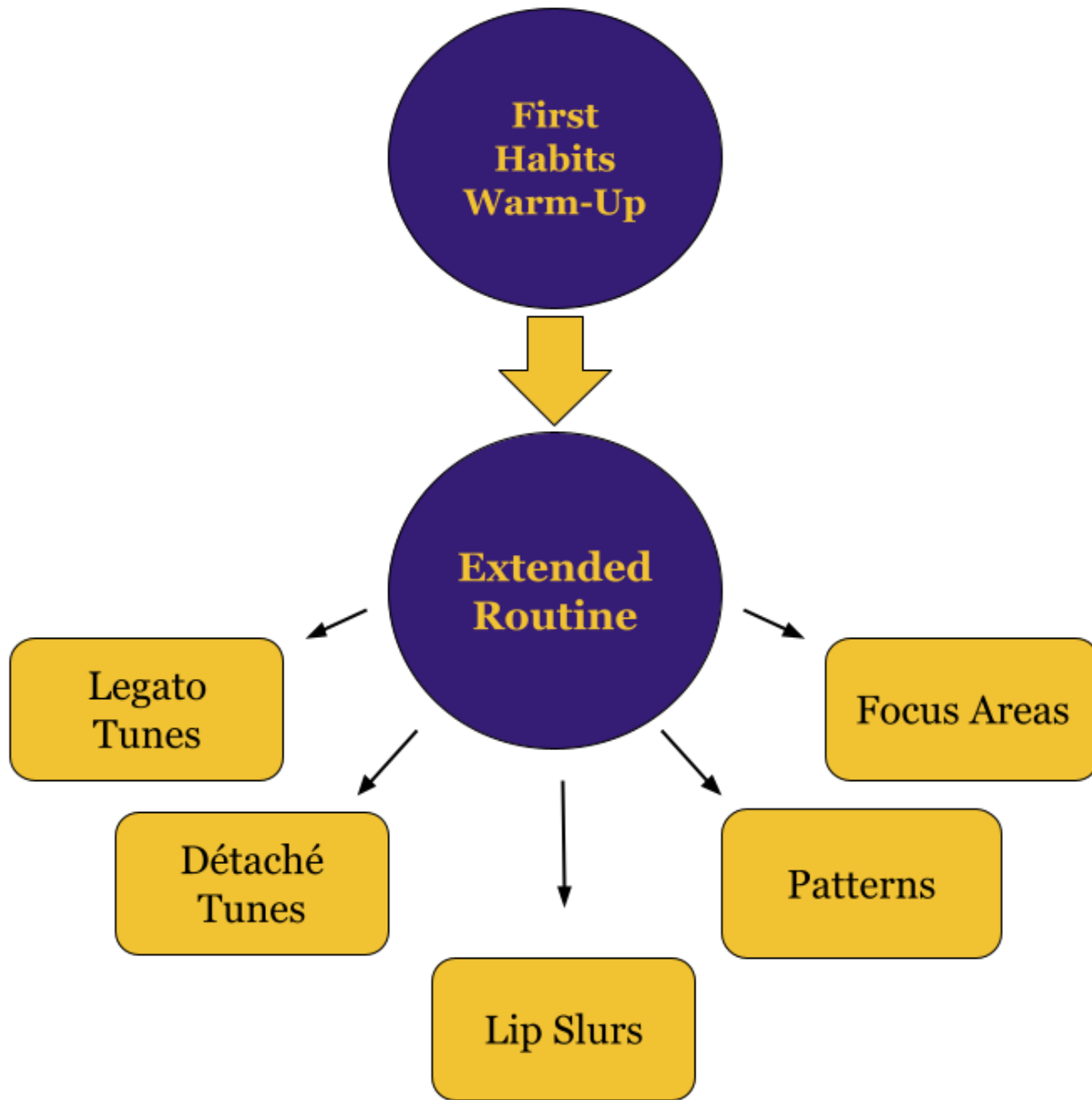
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Fundamentals Routine



Develop a Rotation

If you don't have time to hit every area in your extended routine daily, rotate through different areas so that you cover everything in a week.

| Fundamentals Routine | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| First Habits Warm-Up | | | | | | | |
| Extended Routine: | | | | | | | |
| Legato Tunes: | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Détaché Tunes: | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Lip Slurs | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| Slow Lip Slurs (SLS) | | | | | | | |
| Fast Lip Slurs (FLS) | | | | | | | |
| Lip Slur Melodies | | | | | | | |
| Patterns | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Focus Areas | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
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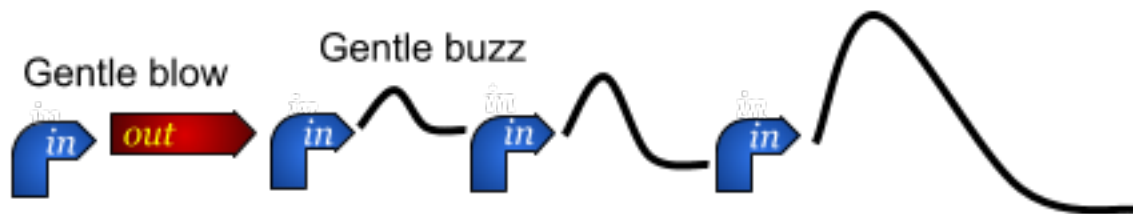
First Habits: Plain Warm-up, Bass Trombone (with accompaniment)

The accompaniment sound files should be available on the TromboneZone.org website.

1. Air/Buzz

[Link: More like this](#)

1. Take a deep but easy breath (very quiet sound) and release it gently. Notice the air rushing in through your mouth as you inhale. Don't make a loud sucking sound.
2. Using the same breath, buzz some arches on the mouthpiece. Keep the sound rich and connected.
3. For the music shown below, gliss smoothly from note to note. Choose a key that works for your range. Substitute other legato melodies as desired. As smooth as possible.
4. You might try singing these first. Your singing voice is a wonderful tool; use it often.



Before some lines you will see a number over a note value. This is the duration of the introduction (or interlude) in the accompaniment track. For example, $\frac{4}{\bullet}$ indicates four quarter notes of intro.

Buzz mouthpiece



Recording, 4 beat into. Scoop into the first note.
Glide from note to note. Smooth blowing.

2. Easy resonance on the instrument

8 [Link: More like this](#) Gliss between notes.

[Link to more \(with accomp\)](#)

3. Five Notes Down

[Link: More like this](#)

8 Very smooth. No tongue as notes change. Listen for beauty of sound and good intonation.

© Brad Edwards, 2021. Please don't distribute.

8

Five Notes Down (continued)

8

Catch a breath as needed.

8

Don't worry if you can't get to the lowest notes. Each day, go as low as you can.

8

8

4. First Slurs

[Link: More like this](#)

8

Center each note, avoid sags going down and bumps going up.

8

Center each note, avoid sags going down and bumps going up.

8

First Slurs (continued)

8

This section contains four staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a measure marked with a large '8' and a common time signature. The first two staves are in B-flat major (two flats). The third and fourth staves are in D major (two sharps). Each staff features a slur over a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a whole rest. The first staff has two slurred phrases. The second staff has two slurred phrases. The third staff has two slurred phrases. The fourth staff has one slurred phrase.

Easier version:

This section contains four staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a measure marked with a large '8' and a common time signature. The first two staves are in B-flat major (two flats). The third and fourth staves are in D major (two sharps). Each staff features a slur over a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a whole rest. The first staff has two slurred phrases. The second staff has two slurred phrases. The third staff has two slurred phrases. The fourth staff has one slurred phrase.

First Slurs (continued)

8

8

8

5. Range Stretch

12 Not too loud. Easy full sound.

First exercise, measures 1-12. The notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff measures 5-8, the third staff measures 9-12, and the fourth staff contains a continuation of the exercise. The exercise features a range stretch pattern: a half note on G2, a half note on F2, a half note on E2, a half note on D2, a half note on C2, a half note on B1, a half note on A1, and a half note on G1. The pattern is repeated across the staves.

Second exercise, measures 1-8. The notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of three staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff measures 5-8, and the third staff contains a continuation of the exercise. The exercise features a range stretch pattern: a half note on G2, a half note on F2, a half note on E2, a half note on D2, a half note on C2, a half note on B1, a half note on A1, and a half note on G1. The pattern is repeated across the staves. A dashed line labeled (8vb) is shown below the third staff.

[Link: High Range Development](#)

6a. Note Placement: Centering Intervals

[Link: More like this](#)

4

Play first in the key of B-flat, then the key of B.

The musical score is written for Trombone in 2/4 time. It consists of two systems, each with four staves. The first system is in B-flat major (two flats). The second system is in B major (two sharps). The music consists of eighth and quarter notes, mostly beamed together, with some rests. The first measure of each system has a key signature change indicated by a double sharp sign.

6b. Note Placement: Building Speed

First time: medium fast. Second time: fastest single tongue.

12



Relaxed tongue moves just a bit, air is key.

7. Musical Patterns

Link: [More like this](#)

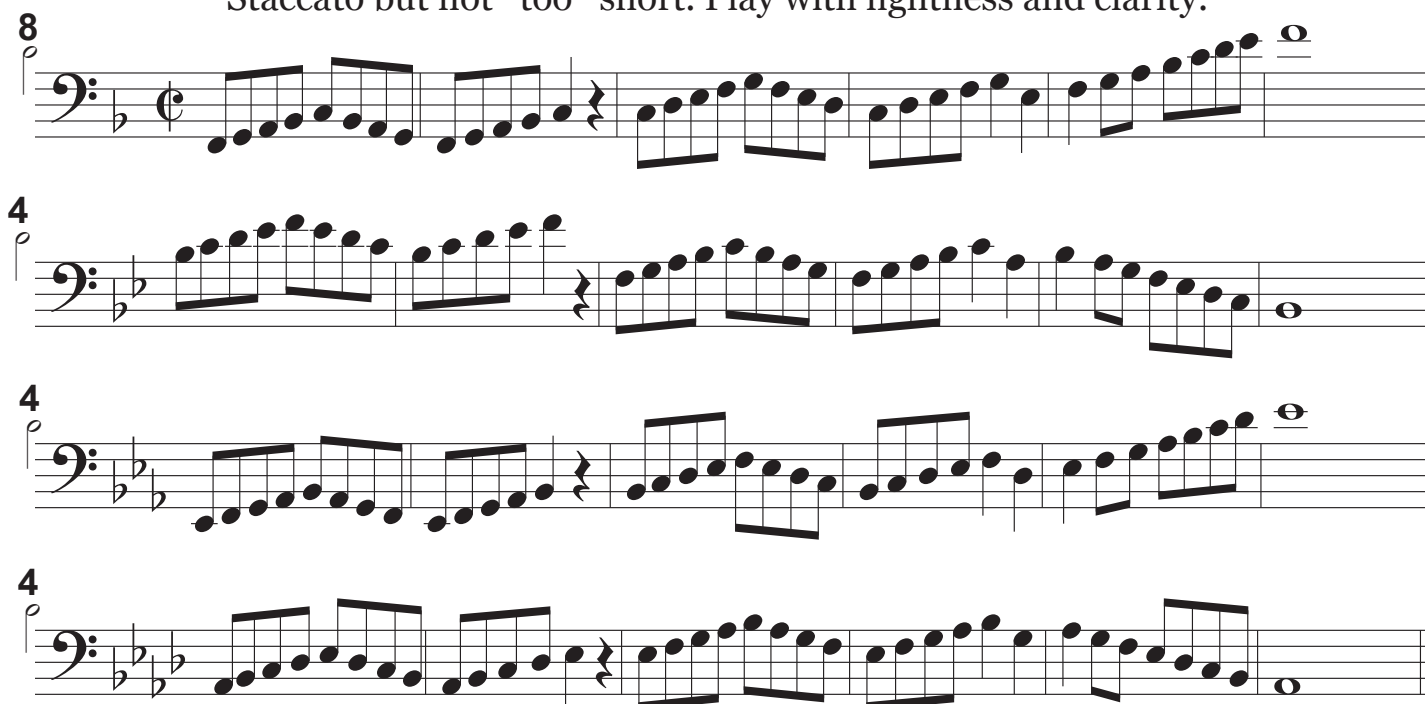
Staccato but not *too* short. Play with lightness and clarity.

8

4

4

4



Musical Patterns (continued)

The image displays six musical staves for trombone warm-up exercises. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The exercises are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Labeled with a large '8' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.
- Staff 2:** Labeled with a large '4' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.
- Staff 3:** Labeled with a large '4' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.
- Staff 4:** Labeled with a large '4' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.
- Staff 5:** Labeled with a large '8' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.
- Staff 6:** Labeled with a large '4' at the beginning. It contains a continuous eighth-note scale ascending from B-flat2 to B-flat4, followed by a descending eighth-note scale back to B-flat2.

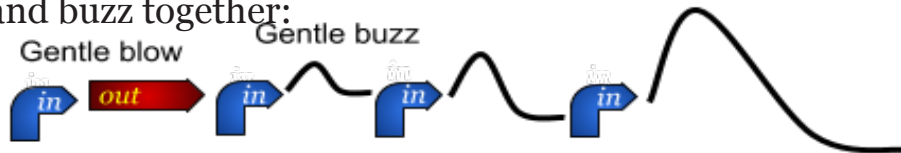


First Habits, Duet Warm-Up (bass with tenor/bass)

In this duet, the top voice is the same as the accompanied routine for bass trombone. So, this can be done with the accompaniment tracks which are available at TromboneZone.org.

1. Air/Buzz

Breathe and buzz together:

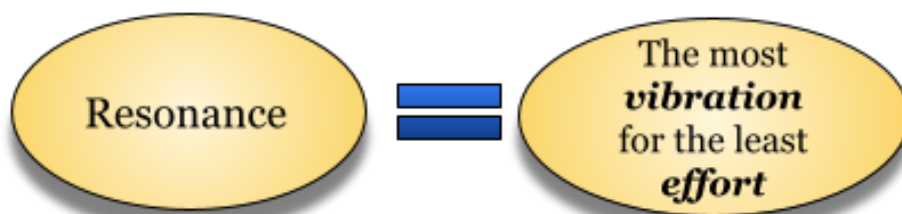
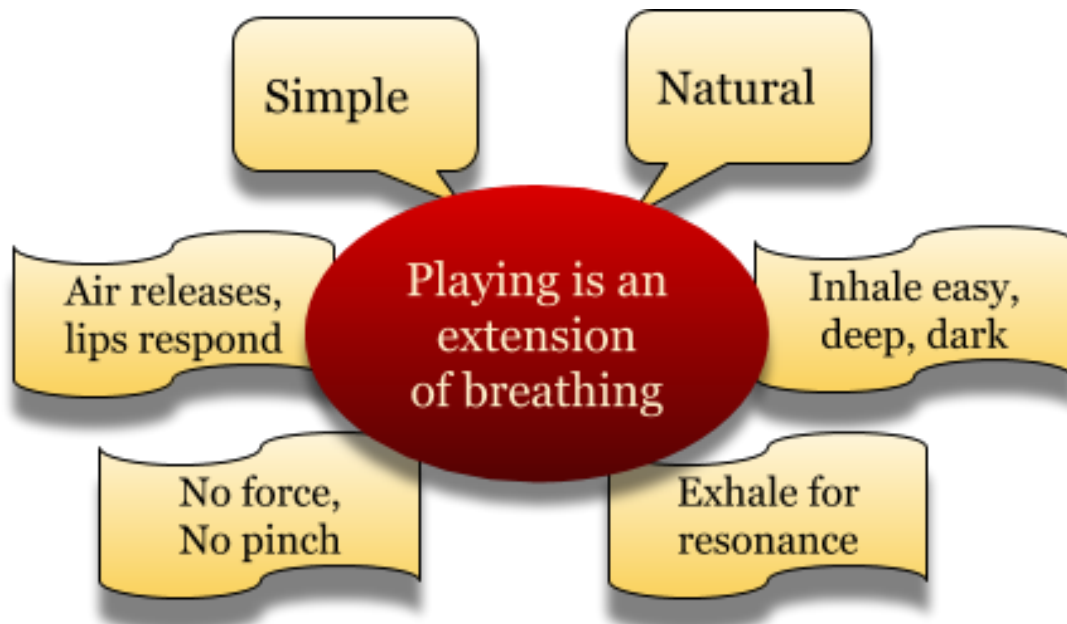


Buzz mouthpiece

4



Concepts: Air/Buzz



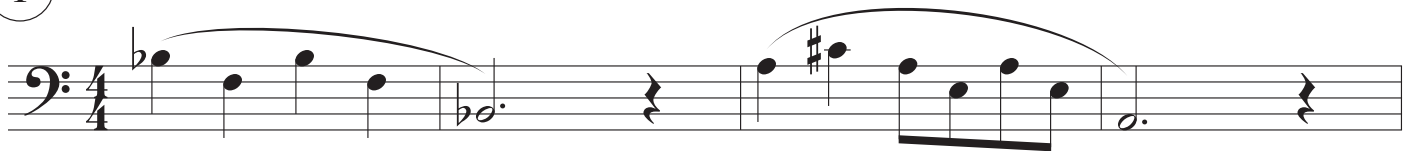


First Slurs: Variations (bass trombone) (with the accompaniment)

Link: Plain Warm-Up (-w- accomp) (w/o accomp)

If you are playing along with the accompaniment, remember the 8-beat introduction for each new pattern

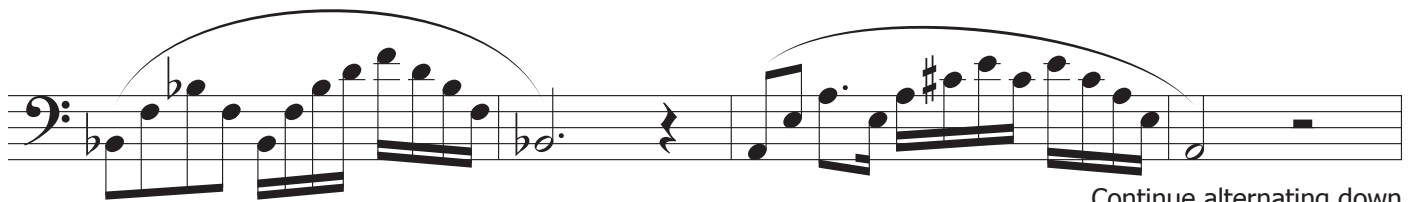
1



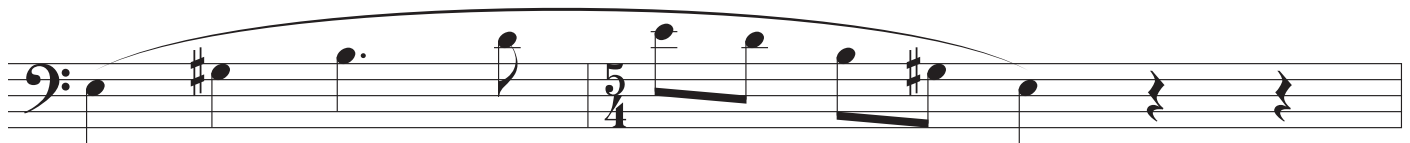
Continue alternating down



Continue alternating up



Continue alternating down



Continue alternating up



Continue alternating down



Concepts: Note Placement

The **air**, not the tongue makes the lips vibrate.

For a clear attack you need:

1. Immediate air flow
2. Lips and oral cavity set for the correct pitch
3. Minimal movement in the jaw/embouchure as the note begins

1. Immediate Air Flow

How to check for immediate air flow?

1. As you buzz, point your mouthpiece at the back of your hand. You should feel little bursts of air for each note.
2. As you buzz, you can dangle some tissue paper just in front of the mouthpiece. Each attack should make the tissue paper jump a little.
3. You can purchase a Portex Inspiron. Turn it upside down and insert your mouthpiece into the tube (I prefer a 4-inch length of flexible vinyl tubing from the hardware store). The little ball in the tube will jump up in reaction to the air. Strive to make it jump right away at the beginning of each note.



Some helpful sayings:

1. Get right to the “ah” of “tah.”
2. Put the vowel on the downbeat.
3. Little “t” big “ah”. Like this: tAH
4. Life in the sound - fastest air right up front (loud or soft)



Note Placement: Variations (bass trombone) (with the accompaniment)

Link: Plain Warm-Up (-w- accomp) (w/o accomp)

1

Play first in the key of B-flat, then the key of B.

4

4

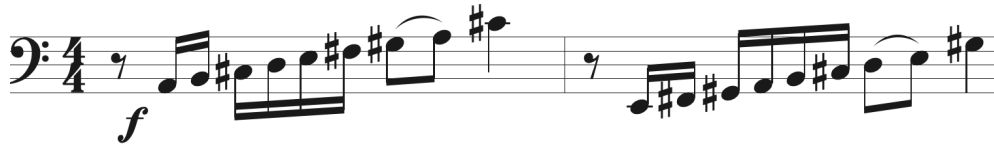


Concepts: Musical Patterns

Patterns (scales and arpeggios) help us to develop pattern-recognition skills which in turn enable us to learn music more quickly (and sight-read better).

Consider this example from my composition, Concert Piece #22: *Insistently - Tenderly*.

Insistently (♩ = 120-126)



The tempo here is rather quick. If a student has been consistently practicing related scales, they are likely to master this passage more quickly. Many younger students use rote mechanical learning so that a scale is effectively reduced to a number sequence. For example, they might think of the B-flat major scale as:

1 - 6 - 4 - 3 - 1 - 4 - 2 - 1

That may be fine for a school band placement test but if they encounter a different passage that doesn't present the notes in that exact sequence, this rote mechanical learning won't be much help.

A student should play that B-flat major scale in a variety of ways so that they can quickly adapt to passages they see in their music. Think of the scale as a template that generates different patterns.



Musical Patterns: Variations (bass trombone)

(with the accompaniment)

Link: Plain Warm-Up (-w- accomp) (w/o accomp)

These patterns are written out completely. Do them both detached and legato.

1

The musical notation for Variation 1 consists of four systems, each with two staves. The first system is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The first staff has a tempo marking of 8 and the second staff has a tempo marking of 4. The second system is in D minor (three flats) and 4/4 time, with tempo markings of 4 and 4. The third system is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time, with tempo markings of 8 and 4. The fourth system is in D minor (three flats) and 4/4 time, with tempo markings of 4 and 4. Each system contains two staves of music, with the first staff of each system having a tempo marking. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns, often beamed together, and includes rests and accidentals.

8

4

4

4

(2)

8

4

4

4



16 Legato Buzzing Tunes (multiple keys)

These are also useful for sight-singing. Sing in whatever octave works for your vocal range. If a piano is available, use it sparingly to check pitch. You might also use these for Sing-Buzz-Play practice.

Glide from note to note without tonguing.

1

a.

b.

c.

d.

This opens with a nice sequence. Can you sing it accurately?

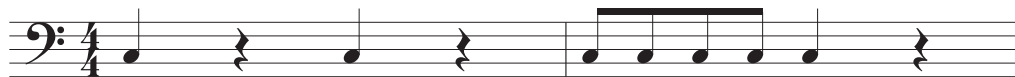
The image displays four musical exercises, labeled a, b, c, and d, each written on a single staff in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. Exercise 'a' is in C major and consists of two lines of music. The first line has four measures of ascending eighth notes, and the second line has four measures of descending eighth notes. Exercise 'b' is in B-flat major (two flats) and also consists of two lines. The first line has four measures of ascending eighth notes, and the second line has four measures of descending eighth notes. Exercise 'c' is in A-flat major (three flats) and consists of two lines. The first line has four measures of ascending eighth notes, and the second line has four measures of descending eighth notes. Exercise 'd' is in B-flat major (two flats) and consists of two lines. The first line has four measures of ascending eighth notes, and the second line has four measures of descending eighth notes. All exercises use eighth notes and are marked with slurs and accents to indicate phrasing and articulation.



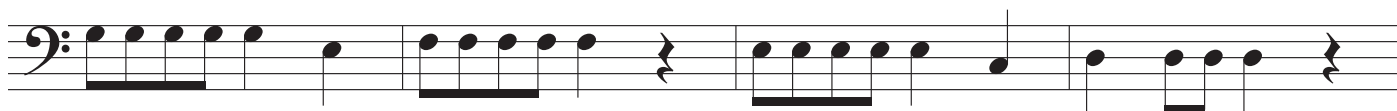
16 Détaché Buzzing Tunes (multiple keys)

Basically, *détaché* means "non-legato." The notes are detached slightly from each other. These tunes are also useful for sight-singing. Sing in whatever octave works for your vocal range. If a piano is available, use it sparingly to check pitch. Make sure the jaw and embouchure corners are nice and stable as you articulate. You might also use these tunes for Sing-Buzz-Play practice.

Before these tunes, you may find it helpful to center the starting note:



- 1 Hold a tissue just in front of the mouthpiece so the air hits it.
Can you see the rhythm on the tissue?



- 7 This one throws in some more syncopations (and one blue note).
As an interesting rhythm exercise, try snapping fingers on beats two and four as you buzz.



Sostenuto: JND Bends & Position-Finders

JND Bends

I find it helpful to make **very** small slide adjustments while listening carefully to my pitch. I call these "JND Bends" where "JND" stands for "Just Noticeable Difference." In other words, the smallest pitch change that can be perceived.

As always, listen first and confirm with a tuner if you wish. How small of an adjustment can you make and still hear it? If you are observant and patient, you might be surprised.

For these exercises, change pitch with the **slide only**. The up and down arrows represent slight adjustments up or down. The \emptyset symbol represents an in-tune note. Of course you can apply this technique to all sorts of situations.

a.

Make sure the **beginning** and the **end** of each note is in tune. Otherwise, try it again.

Position-Finders

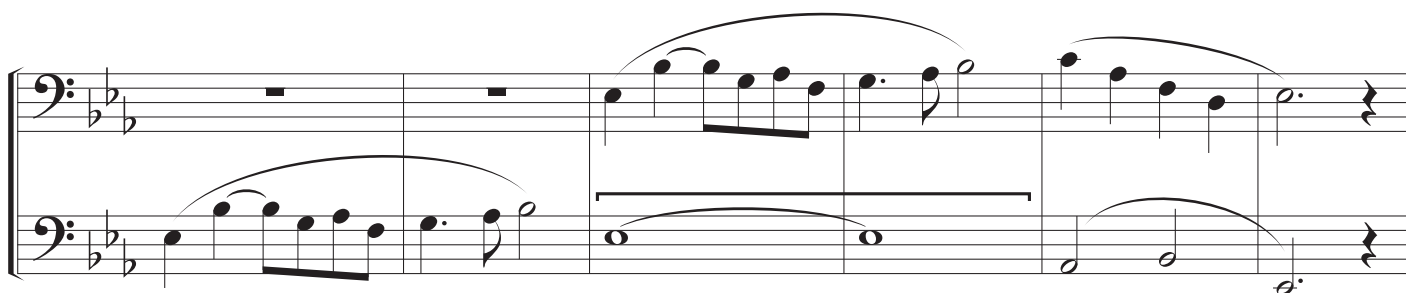
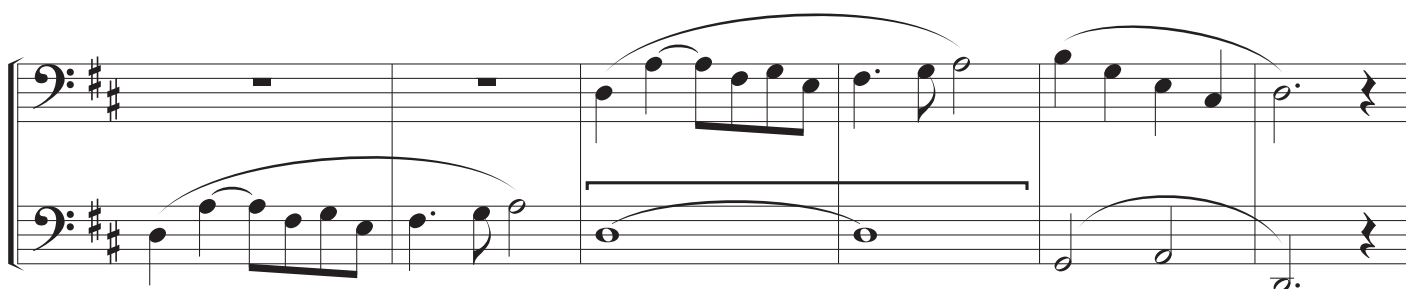
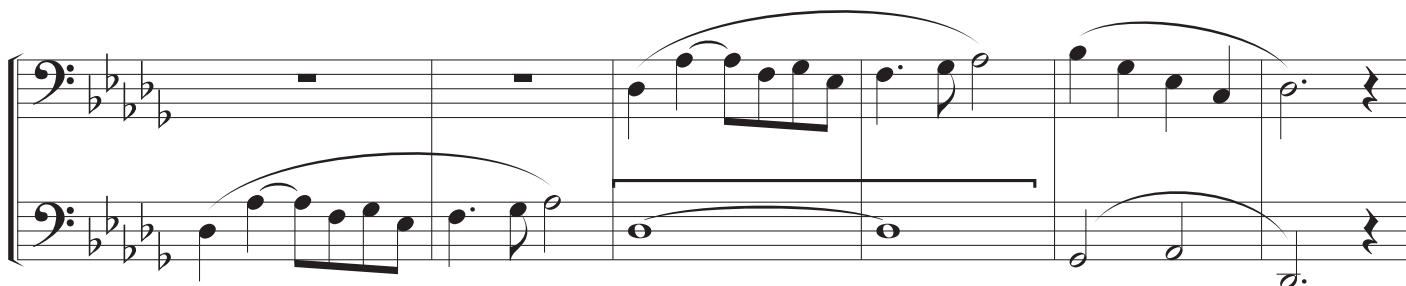
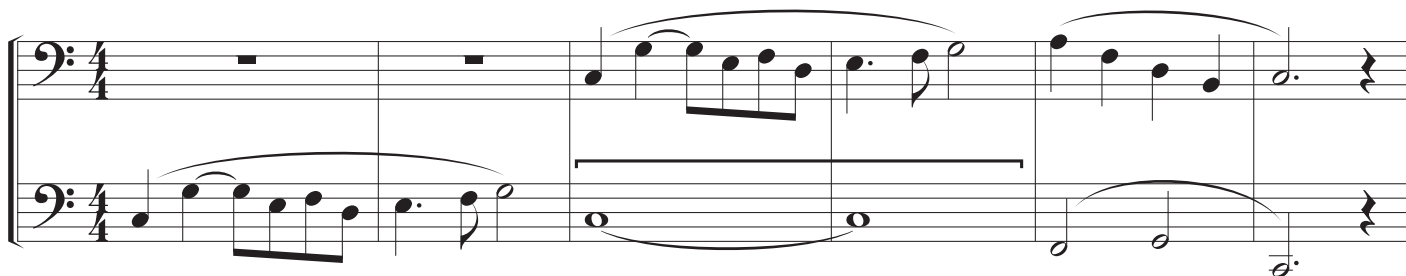
Notes:

1. If you slow these down and really rely on your ear, this makes a good ear-training exercise.
2. Stay to the resonant center of your sound without lipping up or down.
3. If you really miss one position, repeat the gliss a few times until you dial it in.
4. Get a full relaxed sound with as much richness and resonance in the tone as possible.

gliss between positions

b.

- 5 The sustained note under the bracket is optional. It can be left out if desired.





Note Placement: Consistency/Security, Bass Trombone

The secret to this is in the pause between notes. Minimize movement in your embouchure corners. Avoid relaxing and resetting the embouchure. Possibly use a sniff breath. Some adjusting/shifting of the lips *inside* the mouthpiece is normal. Try varying dynamics.

1

Brief pause

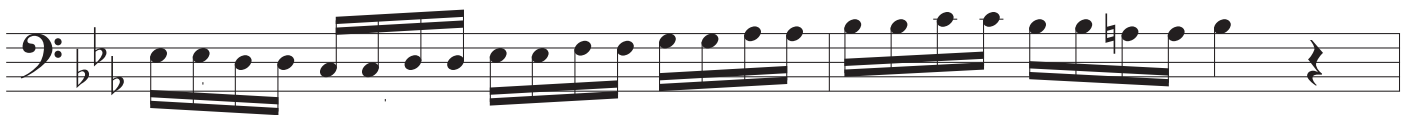
simile

higher?

4 Two-Note Melodic Patterns

These patterns help improve slide accuracy. Make sure the slide moves at the exact right moment. I like to play through all of these as a set. By the end, I find my double-tonguing starts to really click.

♩ = 112-144





Triple Tonguing, Bass Trombone

1 Developing the Triple Tongue

Put the "kah" on the third note of the triplet, not the second. This makes the downbeat stronger.

♩ = 108-144

a.

simile

Don't try to go too fast. Make the notes clear and even.

♩ = 108-176

b.

c.



High Range Development

Link: Plain Warm-Up (-w- accomp) (w/o accomp)

Let's think of it this way: when developing high range there is:

- (1) Ability to hit a certain note at all and
- (2) Endurance in the high range.

This section will deal primarily with #1. As to #2, spend time playing in that range a 5th below your highest note until you feel some fatigue in the embouchure.

Rest is important. Let the muscles recover and rebuild.

Students usually focus on muscle strength when it comes to high range. There's more to it than that.

- (1) Efficiency (how much effort is actually needed for the high note - less than you think!)
- (2) Relaxation (tensing too many muscles or the wrong muscles will make things worse!)
- (3) Inner Hearing (try singing the note in the correct octave, with falsetto if needed).
- (4) Air Stream (many people breathe too deep and try to force too much air at the note)

Basically, there are three ways to move up to high note as you develop your range:

- (1) Glissando to it
- (2) Slur to it
- (3) Hit it directly

All can be useful if done correctly. I suggest a combination of all three.

Final thought:

Some things take time. Be patient and persistent.

See also - Concepts: First Slurs & Range Stretch

High Range Development

1 Glissing to higher notes.

Go as high as you can without hurting yourself. Each day strive for a bit more.

Gliss slowly

The first staff is in 4/4 time, starting on a whole note G2 (fingering 6) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb2, Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note G3 (fingering 1). The second staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note Bb2 (fingering 3) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note Bb2 (fingering 2). The third staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note G2 (fingering 1) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb2, Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note G3 (fingering 1). The fourth staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note Bb2 (fingering 4) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note Bb2 (fingering 1).

Be patient! Don't hurt yourself by pushing to go too high. It takes time.

The fifth staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note Bb2 (fingering 2) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note Bb2 (fingering 1). The sixth staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note Bb2 (fingering 4) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note Bb2 (fingering 2). The seventh staff is in 3/4 time, starting on a whole note Bb2 (fingering 6) and moving up through a series of notes (Bb3, Bb4, Bb5, Bb6) to a dotted half note Bb2 (fingering 1).

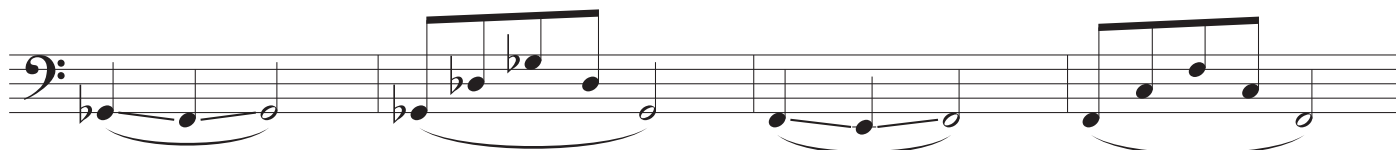
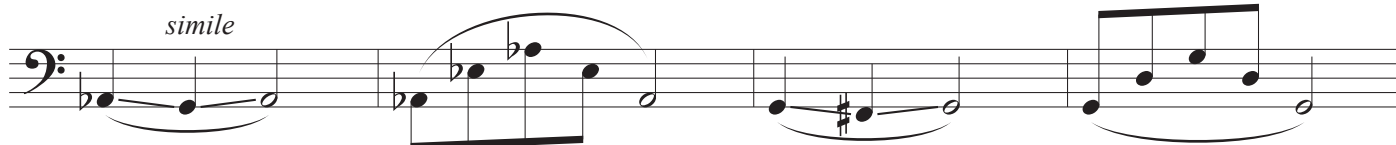


"Happy Chops" Warm-Down Exercises

On all these exercises, gliss when changing positions. Only use the tongue to start notes after breaths (and even those can use a breath attack).
On all of them, pause as needed without a metronome.

1

2x - down an octave

*simile*

Tenors, lip down to the B

Tenors can skip this one



2 Gliss between positions

2x - down an octave

mp

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The first staff features a slur over the first two measures, labeled "2x - down an octave". The score continues with five more staves, each containing melodic lines with slurs and ties, suggesting glissando techniques between positions. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots on the sixth staff.




Concepts: Transposing simple tunes

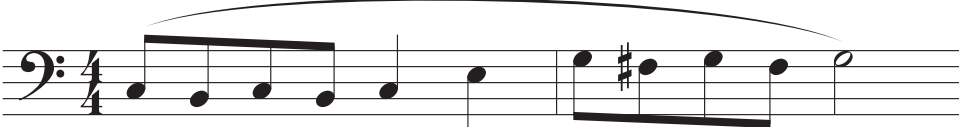
You can transpose simple tunes in a variety of ways. I like alternating higher and lower versions. This is a nice way to work on expanding your range.


Original key: 

Also, F-sharp major

Tenor clef: 

Also C-flat or C-sharp major

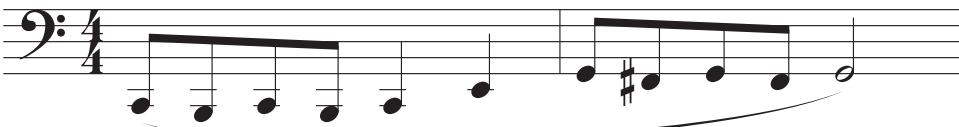
Tenor clef down one octave: 


Alto clef: 

Also E major

Bass clef down an octave: 

Bass clef up an octave: 

Tenor clef down two octaves: 

Bass clef down two octaves: 



14 Little Legato Tunes (Love Songs)

I believe it was the great Roger Bobo who said, "There are only two kinds of music: love songs and pirate songs."

1

a.



b.



6

a.

b.



14 Little Détaché Tunes (Pirate Songs)

Détaché is a French term meaning “detached” or “played individually.” For the most part, play with some separation and a precise beginning to the notes.

- ① Crescendo slightly on the repeated 8ths to get it forward momentum.

[illegible]

10

a.

Exercise 'a' is a four-staff piece in bass clef, 6/8 time. The first staff begins with a whole note. The second and third staves contain eighth notes. The fourth staff concludes with a whole note and a double bar line.

b.

Exercise 'b' is a four-staff piece in bass clef, 6/8 time. The first staff begins with a whole note. The second and third staves contain eighth notes. The fourth staff concludes with a whole note and a double bar line.

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Volume One

[approximate timings shown in brackets]

- #1 Andante con moto [3:30]
- #2 Allegretto - Andante - Allegro giocoso [3:40]
- #3 Noble - Lyrical [4:00]
- #4 March [3:20]
- #5 Alla Tango [3:40]
- #6 Singing - Driving – Dancing [4:10]
- #7 Scherzando – Tranquillo [3:30]
- #8 Misterioso – Giocoso [3:40]
- #9 Piacetole – Vigoroso [3:40]
- #10 With Confidence – With Yearning [4:20]
- #11 Expansive – Carefree [3:40]
- #12 Wistful – Playful – Joyful [3:30]

Volume Two

- #13 Scherzando - Cantabile [3:30]
- #14 Espressivo - Dramatico [4:10]
- #15 Floating – Dancing [4:15]
- #16 Relentless - Wistful – Impish [4:30]
- #17 Impetuoso – Serioso [3:50]
- #18 Grooving – Haunting [4:00]
- #19 Pesante - Scherzando – Waltz [4:00]
- #20 Dream Scene - Chase Scene [4:15]
- #21 Spirited gallop - Woeful lament (Ironic Waltz) [5:10]
- #22 Insistently – Tenderly [4:45]
- #23 Funebre – Imponente [4:45]
- #24 Driving – Dreaming [5:15]

Video recordings available on Youtube.

