

Please note that some of the material following applies specifically to wind players (regarding breathing, sound concept, etc). There are additional Dallas Brass percussion materials available at www.dallasbrass.com

I. MUSIC FOR A LIFETIME

Learning to play an instrument can bring you a lifetime of musical enjoyment. You can play forever – you don't need to be a professional to do so. You can play on an amateur level (as a hobby) or as a part-time professional (earning money, in addition to whatever other career you choose).

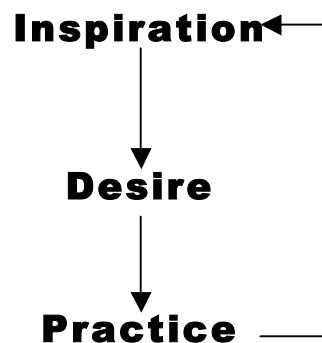
Even if you decide to stop playing at some point, you will be more likely to enjoy and appreciate a great variety of music having had the experience of learning to play an instrument.

DALLAS BRASS MOTTO: *The better you get the more fun it is to play.*

II. PRACTICING

This is the magic word! Just like athletes, musicians need to practice regularly. This is true for all levels – beginners through professionals.

Practicing must start with desire, and desire starts with inspiration. Therefore:



Practicing itself is inspiring because it's fun to get better! So, the cycle continues.

You can create your own inspiration by:

- Listening to great music; especially professionals who play your instrument
- Going to concerts
- Taking lessons
- Practicing

Playing your instrument falls into 3 categories:

- a. **Practicing** – like studying, should be done individually (or occasionally with a friend).
- b. **Rehearsing** – with a group (this is what you do in band); the purpose is to put the music together for a performance.
- c. **Performing** – either an individual performance or with a group.

Note: *Rehearsing and performing do not replace the importance of practicing.*

Practicing is a chance to really improve on your instrument. It's much more than just learning a certain song or piece. Smart practicing will pay off in everything you play.

- Try to practice everyday, if possible (it is better to practice everyday for 30 minutes, than to practice one day a week for several hours). Your practice doesn't have to happen at one time. You could practice 10-15 several times a day.
- Create a practice chart with different items to practice (see below). There are many aspects to playing, so try to practice each for at least 5 minutes a day. It's like going to the gym and following a certain workout routine.

For starting out, you can use scales to practice each of the following. Later, you may want to get some books that provide other exercises and etudes.

PRACTICE SESSION IDEAS

1. **Long tones** – to develop an even, steady sound
2. **Short notes** – clean, short notes, but with a full sound (see diagram in Part VII).
3. **Range** – Start in a comfortable register; keep adding a note onto the scales – up and down – to develop high range and low range
4. **Legato** – Playing smoothly
5. **Dynamics** – Play anything (scales; band music; solos, etc.) at different volume levels. Always maintain a good sound. The six (6) basic volume levels are:

pp – p – mp – mf – f – ff

6. **Flexibility (for brass)** – Practice lip slurs as in the following examples (Notice that the first one is from “The Wizard of Oz”)



7. **Band Music** – Make sure you can play your parts correctly. Use a metronome to make sure you keep the beat steady.

8. **Solos or etudes** – Make sure you can play all the correct notes, and work on your musical expression.
 9. **Play by ear** – Pick a song; start on any note and figure it out as you go (Happy Birthday, Jingle Bells; America the Beautiful; Pop Goes the Weasel; a favorite song from a movie, TV or anything else)! It's OK to make mistakes as you figure it out!
 10. **Memory** – Learn some tunes by memory – see list from above.
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III. LEARNING A PIECE OF MUSIC

The main ingredients in music involve playing the right note at the right time. You must play the right note with the right rhythm to be correct.

Then we add dynamics, articulation and expression and the music really comes alive! That's like the frosting on the cake.

Learning a piece of music is sort of like putting together a jigsaw puzzle or a model airplane – it's made up of many small pieces (segments) that have to fit together perfectly.

IV. HOW TO PRACTICE

Perhaps the most important practice technique is this:

1. Practice small segments
2. Go slowly
3. Correct Repetition
4. Gradually speed up

1. Learn the piece in small segments. Take one measure at a time – or less – if it's complicated. Sometimes it's a matter of getting from one note to the next – so practice just those two notes!
2. Go slowly.
3. Do lots of repetitions – play the segment you are working on correctly 5 times in a row, before speeding it up or going on.
4. Do the same with the next segment.
5. Put the two segments together, following the same procedure.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Sing it! Singing it makes playing it easier.

“DIXIE”



2. Sing the rhythm only. You don't need the instrument to learn the correct rhythm.

3. Play the rhythm on a single note – establish the style (articulation, dynamics, etc.)




4. Play the notes without the rhythm – establish the correct pitches.



V. BREATHING (for all wind instruments)

Wind is the fuel that makes our instruments work.

The way we breathe for everyday life is not adequate to play a wind instrument. We need to learn to breathe in more deeply (and quickly) and to control the flow of air (wind) going out.

Wind is air in motion.  Good wind will help develop good tone, phrasing, high and low notes, dynamics and more.

Think of your instrument in **2 parts**. YOU are the first part. You are the engine and you create the wind (fuel). And for brass players, you create the sound by vibrating your lips. The instrument you are holding (the 2nd part) simply amplifies the sound.

VI. FOUR STEPS TO PLAYING A NOTE

1. **Instrument up** – have instrument up at least 2 measures before you play
2. **Pause/focus** – (embouchure set; touching lips)

The next two steps are connected – like throwing a ball; the arm goes back and then immediately forward

3. **Breathe**
4. **Play**

IMPORTANT: Don't rush this process

VII. PRODUCING GREAT SOUNDS

Every note counts – short, long, high, low, loud, soft, in the melody, or in the background

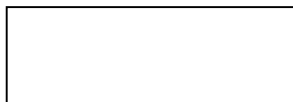
Make every note a pearl. Then when you put several notes together, you have a 'string of pearls'.

Tone – think about words like full, rich, round, dark, firm, steady, centered

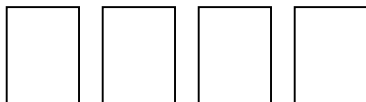
VIII. SHAPE OF TONE

- a. clean, clear beginning
 - b. Steady
 - c. Open release (don't cut note off with tongue)
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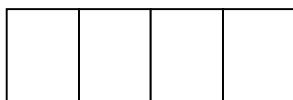
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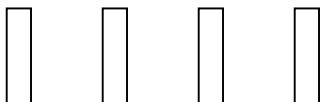
Whole note



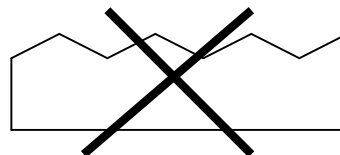
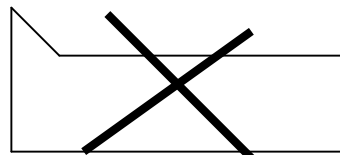
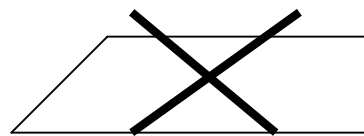
Quarter notes



Quarter notes - legato



NO



Quarter notes – staccato

IX. PRIVATE LESSONS

Taking private lessons – even occasionally – is highly recommended. Weekly is optimal, but on the other hand, even a single private lesson from a qualified teacher can be tremendously helpful.

Ask your band director for help! Even if you want to know how to do one specific thing or how to improve one aspect of playing, your band director would love to help you. Not enough kids ask their band directors for help. Do it!!

X. SMALL ENSEMBLES (Start your own band!)

Consider starting, or getting involved in a small ensemble. (This is how the Dallas Brass got started. We got together to play for wedding ceremonies). There is music available for brass, woodwinds and percussion. In a small group you are more of a soloist. You can play at parties, picnics, hospitals, nursing homes and many other places where people would *really* appreciate you.

XI. LISTEN

- Listening to recordings of great artists playing your instrument is very valuable. It will give you a sound and style concept and should be very inspiring.
- Notices the instruments used in movies you see or in theme songs on TV shows or even commercials. Make special notice of your own instrument.
- Attend concerts whenever possible – especially professional groups.

XII. ENJOY

Playing should be a good time – fun and satisfying. Remember, they call it “playing” an instrument...and everyone knows that playing means fun!

GREAT ARTISTS WITH AVAILABLE RECORDINGS (*Note: There are many more!*)

FLUTE

CLASSICAL:

Julius Baker
James Galway
Donald Peck
Jean-Pierre Rampal
James Walker
Ransom Wilson
Eugenia Zuckerman

JAZZ: Hubert Laws
James Walker

CLARINET

CLASSICAL:

Linda Bartley
Jack Brymer
Larry Combs
Richard Stolzman
Harold Wright

JAZZ: Eddie Daniels
Pete Fountain
Benny Goodman
Chuck Hedges
Woody Herman
Artie Shaw

OBOE

John DeLancie
Alfreed Genovese
Heinz Holliger
Alex Klein
John Mack
Evelyn McCarty
Wayne Rapier
Marcel Tabuteau

BASSOON

CLASSICAL:

Nancy Goeres
Dag Jensen
David McGill
Frank Morelli
Rick Ranti
Milan Turkovic
Stefan Vincentini

JAZZ: Paul Hanson
Richard Lottridge

DRUMMERS

SAXOPHONE

Sidney Bechet
Michael Brecker
Ornette Coleman
John Coltrane
Kenny G
Stan Getz
Coleman Hawkins
Dave Koz
Branford Marsalis
Gerry Mulligan
Charlie Parker
Sony Rollins
David Sanborn
Lester Young

TRUMPET

JAZZ: Louis Armstrong
Chet Baker
Wayne Bergeron
Clifford Brown
Miles Davis
Maynard Ferguson
Dizzy Gillespie
Freddie Hubbard
Wynton Marsalis
Arturo Sandoval
Doc Severinsen

CLASSICAL:

Maurice Andre
Hakan Hardenberger
Adolph Herseth
David Hickman
Wynton Marsalis Rafael
Mendez
Sergei Nakariakov
Charles Schleuter
Rolf Smedvig
Phil Smith

HORN

Hermann Baumann
Dennis Brain
Dale Clevenger
John Ericson
Eric Ruske
Michael Thompson
Barry Tuckwell

ENSEMBLES

TROMBONE

CLASSICAL:

Joe Alessi
Michel Becquet
Blair Bollinger
Norman Bolter
Ian Bousfeld
Randall Hawes
Christain Lindberg
James Markey
Alain Trudel
Ben van Dijk
Charles Vernon
Doug Yeo

JAZZ: Michael Davis
Tommy Dorsey
Wycliffe Gordon
Urbie Green
JJ Johnson
Bill Reichenbach
Frank Rosolino
Dave Steinmeyer
Jack Teagarden
Bill Watrous

EUPHONIUM

Roger Behrend
Brian Bowman
Mark Fisher
Adam Frey
Shoiihiro Hokazono
Steven Mead
Robin Taylor
Kevin Thompson
Matt Tropman

TUBA

Roger Bobo
Arnold Jacobs
Michael Lind
Sam Pilafian
Gene Pokorny
Jim Self
Patrick Sheridan

Louis Bellson
Gregg Bissonnette
Billy Cobham
Peter Erskine
Steve Gadd
Gene Krupa
Buddy Rich
Max Roach
Ed Shaughnessy
Dave Weckl

PERCUSSION
Evelyn Glennie

BRASS:

American Brass Quintet
Burning River Brass
Canadian Brass
Dallas Brass
Empire Brass
London Brass
Philip Jones Brass
Summit Brass

TROMBONES:

Bones Apart
Costa Rican Trombones

WOODWINDS:

Caliban Quartet
(bassoons, contras)
Ensemble Wien-Berlin
Windscape
Wingra Woodwind Quintet
Wizards! (double reeds)

PERCUSSION:

Nexus

BANDS:

Dallas Wind Symphony
Eastman Wind Ensemble
U. S. Military Bands