

These exercises are beneficial for daily warm-ups and maintaining the strength of a trained embouchure. They are intended for advanced and professional trumpet players who seek a routine to “stay in shape” as their performance schedule demands. This collection of exercises merely supplements the many available methods such as Arban’s and Schlossberg. Much of the material presented here will look familiar and universal to any experienced brass player.

This collection is broken up into three groups:

**(Group A) - Lip Slurs / Flexibility / Overtones**

**(Group B) - Tonguing / Articulation / Endurance**

**(Group C) - Tone / Air Support / Range**

One approach in using this material is to select specific exercises from each group and vary the selections, as you so desire. Some days require different needs; therefore mixing up the “menu” is a good idea. Most brass players have an established warm-up routine that they have used over the years and it works for them. Some players prefer a longer warm-up and some players pull the horn out and go. Generally, if you feel like you’re in “good shape” then you might require a longer warm-up period to feel comfortable. Think of highly trained athletes or marathon runners. It’s really the same concept. Obviously the physical demands of your work can vary, but we often find that our “second wind” comes right at the end of a gig, or even your next performance of that particular day.

One possible selection of exercises for a warm-up routine might be as follows:

From (Group A) -  A  B  C

From (Group B) -  C

From (Group C) -  D

From (Group B) -  D

This entire warm-up routine might take approximately 20-25 minutes and it will have touched on all the basics. The importance of rest must always be respected. Vary your selections and group them in any way you feel appropriate. For some exercises it’s beneficial to change the articulations and/or slurs. Make different and challenging studies out of one example. It’s a good idea to balance this material with the playing of lyrical etudes.

## Lip Slurs / Flexibility / Overtones

### Group A

The common lip slur within the overtone series is the backbone of all brass playing. Most players will use these to get the air and lips going. Lip slurs are usually your first notes of the day. The first exercises should be played slowly with the focus on air using *mp* to *mf* dynamics. Later lip slur exercises should be played at a faster rate of speed with the emphasis on flexibility. As with all these exercises, use different slur markings at times: Slur by measure. Use 2, 3, or 4 note groupings. Slur over bar lines and beats, etc. Use any possible combination you can come up with, especially if it makes the exercise more difficult and interesting. This will also help to keep your mind focused. Exercises [D1] and [D2] are simply variations of exercise [D] starting on either the top or bottom of the sequence. In exercise [E] use the (alternate) fingerings indicated, except for the notes that do not have an alternate fingering. For a different approach, you can also play this exercise with all the regular fingerings as well.

## Tonguing / Articulation / Endurance

### Group B

These exercises concentrate on prolonged passages of tonguing in all keys. This type of playing can rapidly wear down the strength of your embouchure. Thus, it should be part of your daily practice routine to build up endurance. (These exercises will also provide familiarity and dexterity in some difficult key signatures as well.)

-Use varied articulations/slurs for all the exercises.

-Find difficult slur combinations, and apply them to the scales.

-Breathe when necessary. You don't have to maintain strict time when breathing, but find pause at an appropriate spot in the scale runs. (Exercises [D] and [E] in particular)

-Use single, double, and triple tonguing. It will be fatiguing!

-Fill up with "relaxed" air and use it efficiently. Don't run on empty, but use up your air.

-Your embouchure "set" should be consistent from the low register to the high register, without radical repositioning or changes.

-Exercise **F** may be a challenge to double tongue. Try single tonguing it. Also, you might try playing it with various slur combinations.  
-When practicing, find a way to make things difficult for yourself and learn to conquer any musical opponent. When performing, find a way to make things easy for yourself, and conquer the audience.

### **Tone / Air Support / Range** **Group C**

All brass players must possess a purity of sound in their tone. Individual concepts of sound can certainly vary within different styles of music, but successful orchestral, jazz, and studio players all share the desire to produce a pleasant tone when they play. The exercises in Group C mostly focus on long tones, another important staple of brass playing. These examples are presented first in the middle octave, then the low octave, and lastly in the high octave. They should be played slowly and without embouchure “re-setting” between the different octaves. Each segment should begin *p* and crescendo to *f* then back to *p*. Strive to make the initial attack clean and precise in each octave.

When low F natural below the staff is encountered, it can be “lipped” (123) down and/or use your slide(s) to achieve the correct pitch. High C# and High D above the staff usually play better in tune using alternate fingerings. Try 2 for C# and 0 (open) for D. High Eb doesn’t seem to have any “good” fingering! When playing any of these high notes, find the fingerings that work best with your particular trumpet/mouthpiece combination.

Exercise **F** is an extended range study, which may or may not be useful to some players. Use caution when attempting this exercise, and don’t hurt yourself.

About the author:

*Jon Clark has led a varied freelance career as an “in demand” trumpet player. He has performed with a diverse variety of groups ranging from “The Temptations” to “The New York Philharmonic”. He serves as principal trumpet with the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, and resides in central New England. Jon Clark’s former teachers include: Robert Nagel, Allan Dean, Mel Broiles, William Vacchiano, and John Ware.*