

Chapter 2

Hand Grips and Playing Position

Hand Grips

Left Hand

Wrap the middle, ring and little fingers with the palm of the hand around the upper slide brace. The palm and these three fingers do most of the work of supporting the **ENTIRE** weight of the trombone.



Fig. 4 Correct Left Hand Grip

Place the index finger against the side of the lead pipe a little below where the mouthpiece enters the instrument. Place the thumb around the bell brace or on the F attachment lever.

You should be able to hold the instrument parallel to the floor with this three-finger grip. Your forearm and wrist muscles will develop strength with a few days of serious practice.

If your left-hand grip is weak, you will try to support the weight of the instrument by hunching your left shoulder, tilting your head or by twisting your neck. These actions restrict your breathing, tighten your throat and twist your embouchure.

Do not use your right hand to help support the instrument. This slows the slide technique, bounces the instrument when shifting positions and makes legato playing uneven.

THE ABILITY OF THE LEFT HAND TO SUPPORT THE ENTIRE WEIGHT OF THE INSTRUMENT WITH EASE IS IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMBOUCHURE, THE BREATHING AND THE SLIDE TECHNIQUE.

Right Hand

While looking into the palm of your hand, place the first joint of the index and middle fingers at the bottom of the slide brace.



Fig. 5 Correct Right Hand Grip

Place your thumb on the other side of the bottom of the slide brace. The brace should touch the side of the thumb near its tip.

not tense. (A further explanation of proper tongue action is found in Chapter 6—Attacks and Releases.)

Tight Throat

Relax and open a choked throat by using the same vowels that you used to lower the base of your tongue—*oo*, *aw* or *oe*. Also, breathe as if you are trying to fog a window. Trying to lower your Adam's apple when playing is also an excellent idea. Edward Kleinhammer suggests that you "relax the cough muscle."

It is difficult to separate the tensions of the jaw, tongue or throat. If the tone is poor, any one or a combination of these factors may be the cause. Since the jaw, tongue and throat are connected, and the tension from one part spreads to adjacent parts, you should consider your jaw, tongue and throat as one unit.

Rather than concentrate on any one factor, check all of the above factors one after the other while working to open your tone.

Tongue Release

Cutting off the note with a tongue release, using the tongue as a valve, is another very common cause of poor tone quality in trombonists. The corrections for this problem are discussed in the next chapter—Attacks and Releases.

Excessive Mouthpiece Pressure

Excessive mouthpiece pressure can hurt the development of a good tone. (See Chapter 4, Embouchure, for a discussion of mouthpiece pressure.)

Tone and Breath Support

A common and temporarily successful remedy for a poor tone is to increase the amount of breath. For beginning and young students, more breath is recommended. The elementary student does not inhale enough nor blows enough air. As a general rule for advanced students, more breath support is **NOT RECOMMENDED**. Although more breath in dramatic and immediate effects are damaging, more air gets through the mouth and the tone will be better. More air gets through the mouth and the tone will be better. More air gets through the mouth and the tone will be better.

face flushes or the blood vessels in the neck and forehead bulge when playing in the middle register, you are using too much breath support. For proper support, all restrictions of the air flow must be relaxed. Rather than increase support, relax your throat and tongue. Breath support should be used, but not abused.

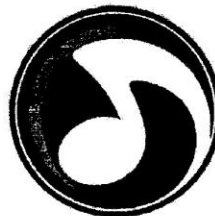
The Anatomy of a Trombone Tone

In an experiment with rubber lips and an air pressure tank, Robert Weast was able to determine what lip tension and what air pressure was needed to produce a note on a brass instrument. He could set the lip tension at a certain tension and then adjust the air pressure until he got a certain note. He then plotted the results on a graph.

Lip Tension



He found more
by decreasing
pressure to
certain
lip tension
T



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Preliminary Exercises
from

Studies in Legato for Trombone by Reginald H. Fink

(♩ = 90)

#1

Tah thah thah Tah thah thah Tah thah

thah simile

(♩ = 90)

#2

Tah thah thah simile

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As the stroking of the tongue becomes natural and consistent, use the same type of exercise at quarter-note speed.

Str

#3



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Chapter 13

Scales and Arpeggios

The novice does not practice scales unless he is forced to, while the professional trombonist practices scales because he wants to. Obviously the professional knows how he will benefit from scale practice.

Learning the scales is only the beginning, not the end. Once the scales have been learned, they can be USED to further develop all aspects of the technique. Not only can more technique and facility be learned, but better endurance, high register, low register, tone, attack, legato, staccato and vibrato can be achieved with scale and arpeggio practice. In order to receive the benefits from scale practice, the scales and arpeggios must be learned and practiced regularly with attention and purpose.

To benefit from scale practice, observe these points:

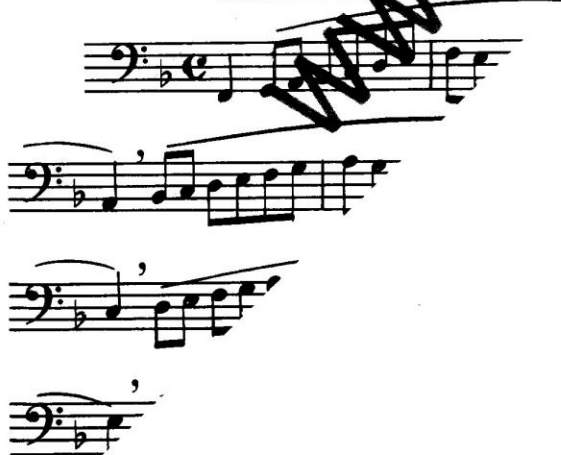


fails to develop the technique needed for the performance of the scalic passages as they are found in music. Patterns do not always begin on the tonic (key) and end on a strong pulse and end on the tonic on a strong pulse.

Diatonic

The scale
or the
of

Detached and slurred



Memorization

Memorize them completely so that the pitches can be heard, the notes on the staff can be visualized, and the feel (kinesthetic sensations) of the slide and embouchure positioning are sure. Do not memorize the scales and arpeggios by learning the numbers of the slide positions only. When the scales and arpeggios have been completely memorized, you should be able to automatically play almost anything that you hear or see.

Patterns

Only playing the scale in one part



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High Register



♩ = 90



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