

Thoughts on a Daily Warm-up Routine & Suggested Exercises

Much of the information, as well as the exercises, that follow in this suggested routine has been passed on to me by former teachers and current and past colleagues. This portion of this text owes much to Gerald Sloan (the University of Arkansas), Brian Bowman (The University of North Texas) and Daniel Perantoni (Indiana University). I am grateful to have had the benefit of their expertise and hope that their ideas together with my own experience as a teacher are of value to the reader.

What does "warm-up" mean?

Many young brass students envision the notion of "warming up" as something that is done for the benefit of the instrument they play: "My instrument is cold: I think I need to warm it up." In fact "warming up" is an action that has much less to do with the instrument than it does the body. When warming up we are, in fact, preparing our body for the very physical act of playing the instrument. The lips, face, tongue, and lungs are gradually brought into a state suitable for the physical activities of playing much in the same way that an athlete prepares the various muscle groups for strenuous activity by stretching. Because of the simplicity of material and approach to most warm-up exercises, the player is able (in addition to "warming up" the muscles) to make significant progress in areas such as tone production/response, tone quality, articulation, intonation, and pitch focus and accuracy, among others. The warm-up is, therefore, the most important playing most of us do on any given day – it is a time to study ourselves, as well as our approach to our instrument.

What should a warm-up routine include?

A good routine should include the things that one must do every day in playing. Basic exercises should treat good tone production (with emphasis on getting and using them freely – recommended texts: *The Breathing Gym* and *The* Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan), lip flexibility over the standard range of articulation on moving passages and repeated notes, and pitch focus (emphasis on breath, ear, embouchure, and tongue). If some specific tonguing, wide intervals, etc.) is included in any given day's act should somehow also be inserted into the routine (again, more presented here can be found in *The Brass Gym*). The warm-up the playing of lyrical melodies. One can find such material such as the Arban "Art of Phrasing" from the *Complete Method for Trombone and Euphonium* standard songbooks. However, players at any most musically by simply playing one or two sensitive to keys and intervals is an area teachers. The simple act of playing a will set one apart from peers quickly.



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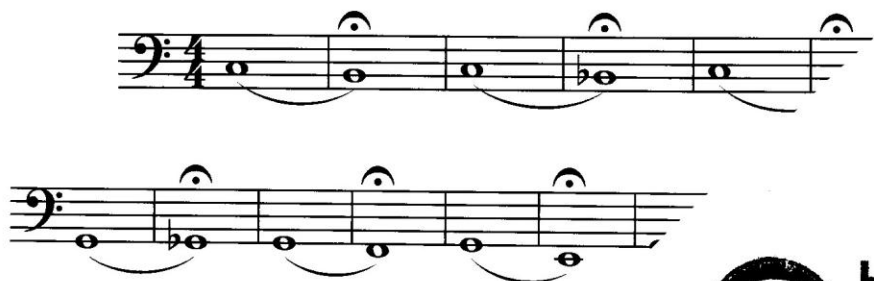
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Explore

Please note that there are many valid and valuable approaches to the daily routine. The procedure I am suggesting here is not a panacea for all problems nor is it necessarily the best routine for every player. It simply represents experiences that have been successful for me and for most of my students for many years. I hope that you are able to benefit from some portion of these suggestions and exercises, but don't be afraid to expand upon or add to these suggestions or make up new exercises that more specifically meet your needs.

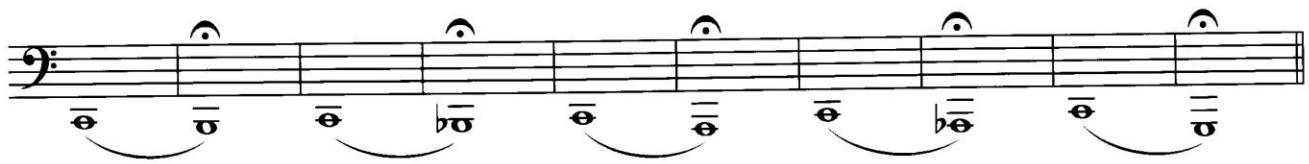
Part I: Long Tones

Long tones help to encourage proper breathing, as well as to recall the processes involved in good tone production. Before sounding the first note of your day's practice time, try to recall the best sound made in the previous day's practice session and try to reproduce that sound immediately. As you proceed through the long tone exercise, maintain mental focus on taking full, relaxed breaths and play with a full, rich sound at a minimum dynamic of mezzo forte. Plan to breathe after at least every two notes during the first two-thirds of the exercise given here. Many tubists will likely need to breathe after every note in the last third of the exercise. DO NOT try to "stretch" your breath too far! Producing acceptable tone quality requires a lot of air on low brass instruments. Players who consistently "hold back" air in order to "make" phrases will usually have a very "tight," constricted tone quality and will also generally suffer major intonation problems. Breathe at any and every opportunity in order to produce your best tone all of the time. Nothing of musical value is accomplished with anything less than your best tone. The notation for long tones given here is presented with this in mind. If you are using a BB-flat tuba, begin on second line B-flat. E-flat tubists begin on third space E-flat, F tuba players should begin on third line F, and euphonium and trombonists should begin on the B-flat on top of the bass clef staff.



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Part II: Lip Flexibility Exercises

Lip flexibility exercises help to loosen and relax the lip and facial muscles and are especially effective in building embouchure strength and efficiency (thus endurance). Begin by buzzing the B-flat to D interval on the mouthpiece with a gentle glissando between the two notes. Don't allow the buzz to stop between the two notes. The tone quality of the buzz should be very full – think of and try to imitate the sound of the buzz of an angry bee. Once you can do this accurately, then buzz from D back to B-flat, again with a smooth glissando. When you can perform both of these intervals smoothly, put them together (B-flat to D and back to B-flat). Then buzz the entire first line of the exercise below. Speed is not important, but maintaining the glissando and pitch accuracy is very important. Use the air in the same way as you did in the long tone study. Proceed through each line of the study, first buzzing the entire line, then playing it. Master the first five lines before going on to the new patterns introduced in the two exercises that follow. In each exercise, all notes must be of equal tone quality.

NOTE: If you are successful with the exercise described on the mouthpiece, but get "bumpy" results when you go to the instrument with the mouthpiece, try placing the mouthpiece just barely into the leadpipe and repeating the buzzing exercise. Gradually move the mouthpiece into normal position as you buzz. We need to be vigilant to see that our approach to buzzing the mouthpiece away from the horn duplicates EXACTLY our physical approach to the mouthpiece on the instrument. This is to say that the angle that we hold the mouthpiece when doing buzzing exercises should be as close as possible to the angle present when addressing the instrument.

Exercise One



Ten staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals). The staves are arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top to bottom.



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Fifth Study

This study is an excellent resource for working on fluency in all keys and for working on improving range. Play each exercise in its parallel minor key to receive all the benefits available. Start on the lowest line that you can play with clarity and play through to the line with the highest last note that you can play without undue discomfort. I consider this to be one of the "essential" scale studies in the pedagogical repertoire. (Companion studies: See Arban Scales: Tuba pp. 63-80, Euphonium/Trombone pp. 64-87 and Characteristic Study No.12: Tuba pp. 328-329, Euphonium/Trombone pp. 342-343)

The image displays eight staves of musical notation for the 'Fifth Study'. The notation is written in bass clef. The first four staves are in B-flat major (two flats), and the last four staves are in B-natural major (two sharps). The time signature is common time (C) for the first two staves and 3/4 for the remaining six. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a continuous scale-like pattern. The staves are arranged vertically, with the first staff at the top and the eighth at the bottom.



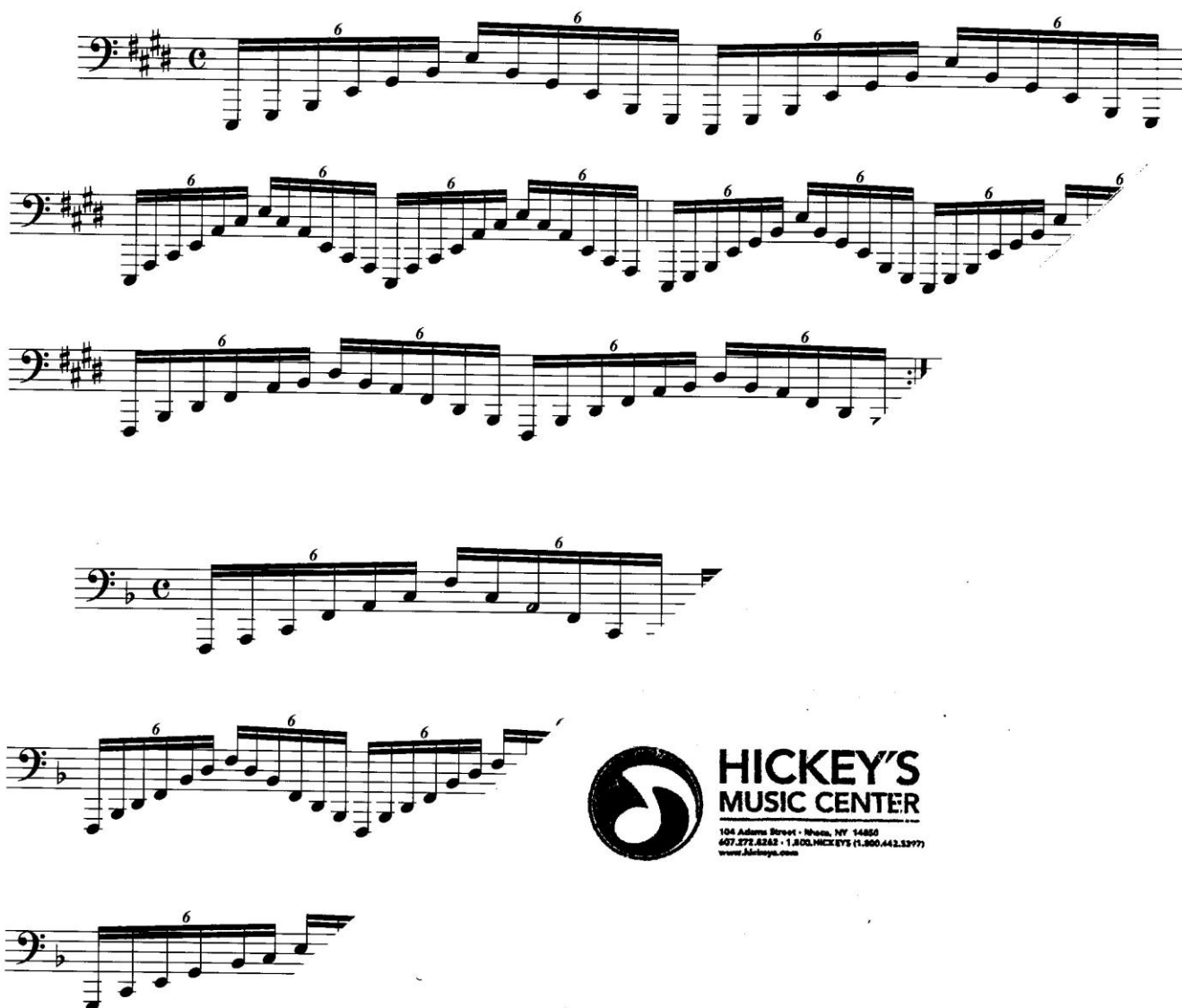
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Arpeggios

Clarke provided these studies on some basic major arpeggios and arpeggios on the diminished seventh chord without a lot of comment other than to practice them. I recommend that these patterns be paired with the appropriate scale studies after the fifth study. Frequently performance of arpeggios at the conclusion of scales is required for a variety of auditions, but particularly in auditions for "honors" groups. More important than the audition aspect and as is true of scales, working with arpeggios in a focused way turns the attention of the ear to intonation accuracy, whether practicing the major arpeggios or the diminished seventh arpeggios. This is yet another exercise that can be of immense benefit to the aspiring jazz player. (DO practice all the major arpeggios in their parallel minor keys!) (Companion studies: See Arban Interval Flexibility and Technique: Introduction to the Arpeggio: Tuba pp. 146-157, Euphonium/Trombone pp. 160-171 and Characteristic Studies No.1: Tuba pp.306-307, Euphonium/Trombone pp.323-324, No.3: Tuba pp.310-311, Euphonium/Trombone pp.326-327 and No.6: Tuba pp.316-317, Euphonium/Trombone pp.331-332)

For Tuba



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Seventh Etude, for Tuba



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Eighth Etude, for Euphonium (Trombone)



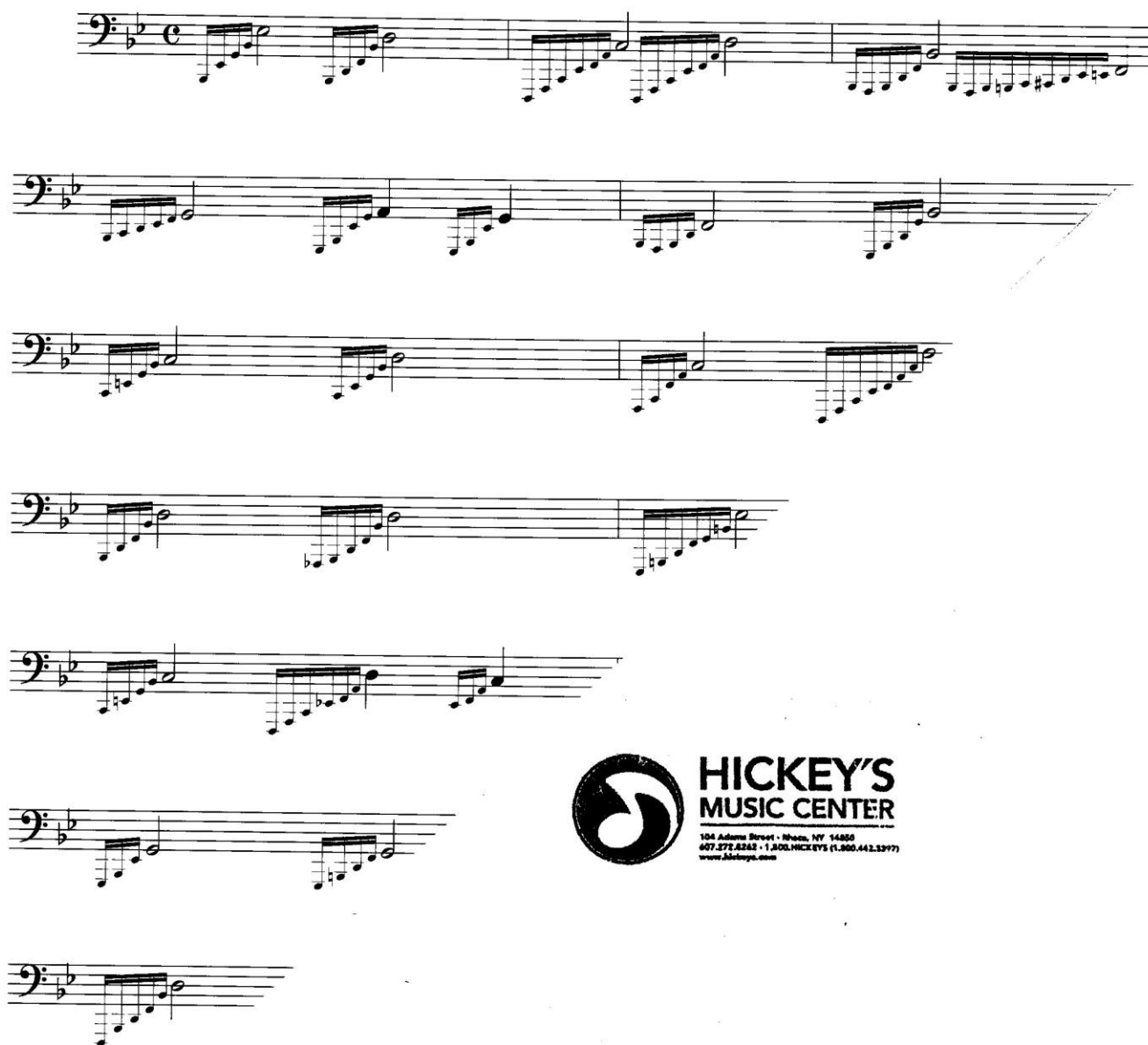
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Tenth Study

Herbert L. Clarke was, without doubt, among the very finest virtuoso brass artists of his day. Theme and variation solos utilizing numerous special effects to amaze and amuse audiences were an important part of the repertoire. A large number of the solos that made Clarke, as well as low brass soloists such as Simone Mantia and Arthur Pryor, so famous are still in existence and an important part of our heritage as brass players. The tenth study (which includes the tunes to *Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms* and *Du Bist im Herzen*) provides material for practice of one of those effects. The intention, according to Clarke, is so that "...a melody may be played to sound complete without an accompaniment." His instruction is to "Play the small notes *sotto voce*, or like a whisper, accenting the large notes full and strong." (Companion study: Arban Characteristic Study No.14: Tuba pp.332-333, Euphonium/Trombone pp.345-346)

For Tuba



The musical score for the Tenth Study for Tuba consists of seven staves. Each staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The music is written in a single melodic line, featuring a variety of note values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, as well as rests. The notation includes slurs and ties to indicate phrasing and duration. The score is presented on a white background with black ink.



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