

I must admit that the idea of a warm-up routine came to me rather late in my playing career. I used to think that the first quarter of an hour of a rehearsal or recording session was the time for such activities, and that the whole "warm-up" business was something vaguely American in concept and not to be taken too seriously. Now that I spend too little time practising and too much time travelling, I have come to realise the value of an organised warm-up to keep my lips in some sort of shape. I also have noticed in teaching that very few students have any proper way of preparing themselves for a hard day's blowing at their studies. For me there are two essentials in a warm-up routine. Firstly, it must be short (one should not become a slave to a lengthy work-out). Secondly, it should not be exactly the same every day. After all, our lips vary in response from day to day, depending on the sort of playing we have been doing and the climatic conditions we are working in.

I think it is better for a brass player to begin his warm-up from a middle note with a middle note embouchure, rather than from a low note and low note embouchure. The middle note embouchure is the one we use for most of our playing and it's easier to start the day in the middle of the instrument rather than at the bottom and have to climb up.

I also find it helpful to begin all the notes *without* the tongue—just on air pressure alone. In this way I remind myself of the necessity for a sufficient air supply to *begin* a note clearly and cleanly.

The following are a few of the patterns I use:



don't leave the G for the C until it vibrates easily.

keep the air supply constant and the embouchure firm.

try to make the interval from G to E as smooth as possible.

centre the sound and watch that the E is not flat.



don't over tense for the G and try to keep the sound open on all the notes.

play this interval without a 'bump'.

don't relax the embouchure too much for the low C.

Use these patterns in descending semitones depending on how much time you have. Gradually work outwards from the middle note increasing your range upwards and downwards.

Always listen attentively to your sound and *intonation*. Don't think it sufficient just to blow through one of these patterns. Those who concentrate the most on what they do get the farthest on the instrument.



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