Daily Fundamentals for the Trumpet (International Music)

By Michael Sachs

And

Lessons learned from Bud Herseth (notes taken at lessons)

By Tim Kent

Transcription and development of unified text

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From the foreword to Sachs book by Michael Gould, Principal Trumpet-Metropolitan Orchestra

On practice and practicing:
What should I practice? How should I practice? How do I construct a daily routine? How do I determine if I am practicing my routine correctly?

Gould responds to his own questions:
…there are no pat answers. Grappling with the fascinating complexities inherent in practicing a musical instrument is a life-long struggle which requires patience, ingenuity, stealth, determination, and even a sense of humor. Learning to play an instrument is not a mechanical process but rather continuously artistic one. Improvement is made by careful conscious practice of the basic skills that over time build a solid reliable technique. The aspiring musician must put the mind and ear into the body when practicing fundamentals. …One never masters the basic skills of buzzing, timing, balance, relaxed air-flow, articulation, and control of air speeds. Technique is always a work in progress.

From Tim Kent's lesson notes with Bud Herseth

The essence of Bud's teaching is that he builds ego, attitude, and musicianship. He lets technical things work themselves out. He conveys the belief: "I can play anything." He encourages you to replace all thought of technical difficultly with the notion that what you are experiencing is musical difficulty. Herseth's musical thinking allows his chops to do amazing things. He doesn't try harder than anyone else…he is just so dedicated to being musical. That is the voice he ushers through his trumpet.

From the introduction by Michael *Sachs, Principal Trumpet-Cleveland Orchestra*
…we all search to understand how to better prepare ourselves for performances and play consistently at our highest levels. …technique is not an end in itself, but rather a means to support musical expression…make sure to always apply those concepts in a musical context so that musicality and technique are never mutually exclusive.

A consistent daily warm-up routine is an important starting point. Think both long term and daily maintenance. Your warm-up routine is as much for your future as it is for the present. The warm-up, like stretches for a runner, is a time to loosen up physically and get mentally focused for the day's work. When done thoughtfully, your warm-up can help you achieve many things: better flexibility, a broader range of tone color and dynamics, amore supple relaxed feeling in your lip, sharper mental focus, more efficient and relaxed air movement, and hopefully, a longer and more successful career.

If you do a uniform sequence of exercises the first thing every day on the Bb trumpet, your stability and consistency will be greatly enhanced. By doing daily exercises and musical fundamentals thoughtfully, you are programming yourself to do things correctly.

…a crucial element of a successful routine is a balanced approach to practicing. …avoid overemphasizing one discipline at the expense of neglecting others. Avoid practicing "on automatic pilot." Thorough meticulous work in the practice room translates directly to your envisioned end result.

It is very important to strive for an even sound throughout the different registers of the trumpet. Connections should be smooth and even with properly relaxed air support. Every note on the trumpet has a slot where it belongs. Work towards centering every note in the bulls-eye of the slot, regardless of its length, range, or context. Technical facility is crucial, but tone is the element that truly defines a trumpeter's identity. Thoughtful practice promotes consistent performance.

Chapter One: Warm-Up (Sachs)

Establishing the Routine

Formulate a balanced warm-up routine that covers a wide variety of musical concepts. The low range is like the foundation of a sturdy building. Properly

placed low notes usually result in properly placed higher notes. Don't linger too long in any one area of your warm-up routine; explore different disciplines and different registers. **Play the majority of the warm-up in a medium dynamic range (*p to mf*).** As you loosen up, you can explore a wider dynamic range. Keep soft playing smooth, centered, and relaxed. Efficient use of airflow in the lower dynamics will translate into a deeper, more flexible tone as you increase volume later.

Proper pacing is important. The warm-up serves to align fundamental tone production concepts and build strength. Take time between exercises giving your lip recovery time before proceeding.

To assure a solid placement of any note (all ranges, dynamics, note lengths etc) focus on smooth connections, that are even, centered, and in tune. Use a tuner and metronome as helpful tools.

Don't lock your warm-up routine down too specifically; remain flexible and have several versions of a warm-up ready to go. Have routines that vary in length. Avoid complacency with the organization of creative routines.

Endurance is greatly enhanced for players who develop and sustain a daily warm-up routine. Efficient and relaxed airflow is essential. If the air is choked, it forces the lip muscles to work more than necessary, causing fatigue to occur much sooner. When practice no longer sounds productive – stop and rest – get away from the horn for a bit. Two sessions of concentrated practice may serve you better than one long session that becomes counter-productive.

The daily warm-up routine, when consistently practiced becomes your barometer of essential fundamental skills.

Herseth:
On breathing. Pronounce the syllable 'Ho' as you inhale. Using a breathing tube reveals the equal ease of inhaling and exhaling.

NEVER PRACTICE, BUT ALWAYS PERFORM. Practice in 45 minute segments like Herseth. After the first 15-20 minutes of playing (warm-up), take a 10 minute break to stay fresh. REST often so you feel fresh all of the time. As you

start playing remember to project a message. Never just impress with mechanics. Put words to everything! Think only what the music sound likes, not what it feels like. Listen to good artists and know what you want.

On mistakes. When you make a mistake, be proud of it. Put your horn down, stare at the conductor. Unless his ear is great, he won't know. If he does, fine! A trumpeter's life is risky, and you have to be able take those risks. Great playing results when you face the risks. Don't run from them. Rather than thinking you have problems in your playing elect to consider that certain areas aren't perfected yet. Enjoy the journey of making those areas better!

On rhythm. Pulse is the primary point. It keeps the music moving, and makes the overall sound more musical.

On counting. Everybody comes in late after rests, do something about it.

On dynamics. Keep dynamics through a phrase, and keep dynamics consistent. For soft playing – play soft as if you are playing loud. Flow the air same as forte. Think SOUND always whether at soft or loud levels. Always be heard at any dynamic level.

On intonation. Always think sound and not intonation. The intonation will be there if the sound is there. Listen to hear the sound of the note you desire, before you hit the note.

On releases. Know how long you want to hold the note, and then stop it. Don't hold it until it stops.

On entrances. Know your accompaniments, listen to the ensemble. Having all this in your head and listening will help you make musical entrances.

Keep the horn and mouthpiece clean. Weekly if needed.

Buzzing (Sachs)

It must be compact and centered, yet flexible. Remember this about buzzing: a little goes a long way. Seek to replicate the feeling of using the trumpet when you buzz. For lip buzzing, the lips must not be reconfigured from your normal trumpet playing style. Reflect your normal feel and set-up. When buzzing on the

mouthpiece, hold the mouthpiece in the left hand with the thumb and index finger about one inch from the bottom of the shank. The other three fingers should simply float. It is important to think forward, connected air between notes. Make sure the air stream does not decrease as you are about to change pitch. As you move around, seek motion that connects the center of one pitch to the center of the next pitch. These motions must be made with no swoops or bumps into between, just smooth connections. Think long tone air as you move through each pitch and allow natural tongue movement to assist you as you travel through different ranges.

The use of a keyboard or a tuner set to the fundamental note is highly recommended.

By buzzing in a manner reflecting the actual feeling of playing the trumpet, you are putting into place all the basic elements of tone production: 1) correct breathing for relaxed air movement, 2) placement of the tone with clarity and assurance, 3) well-slotted notes with centered pitch, 4) even and connected sound, 5) proper relative intonation. Buzzing can also help with matters of timing as you focus on all these elements occurring in good time. Learn to judge the proper amount of air. We seek a buzzing tone that has a full-bodied core sound, as opposed to one that is thin, and pinched, or overblown. Extend range carefully starting lower and only working higher as your skill and control develops.

Herseth:
Solfege—Sight Sing—Buzz excerpts and studies. Mouthpiece buzzing. Herseth recommends an occasional All-mouthpiece buzzing practice session. This session can eliminate hang-ups and improves everything from sound to articulation. Practice on the mouthpiece everyday before your regular session. Play anything musical (not exercises): pop tunes, arias, etc. Work on being very musical and creating a very LARGE sound on the mouthpiece.

Long Tones (Sachs)

Breathe in a natural manner that allows your playing to be relaxed, centered, and in control. Connect the tone smoothly as you change notes. Keep your tone quality and intonation stable form the beginning of the note to the last moment it sounds, regardless of register or dynamic. Avoid playing on one breath to the end of your capacity. Playing on stale air leads to a squeezed tone and unwanted

tension. Use a metronome and tuner to assure rhythmic and intonation stability. Rest 4 counts after each study.

Herseth:
Practice Long Tones in all registers and volumes. Approach tone on the lines of a good sound and intonation will come there too. The ear will do all the work if we let it. To get a big sound it is imperative to get the air flow (movement) to be greater. The air pressure is not what creates the big sound, it is the speed. Like a violin bow on strings – it is not pressure on the strings but speed on the strings that makes the sound sing and be big. Release the air immediately & don't hold it. Don't overblow. Take it easy. You will play better if you don't actually blow so hard, and concentrate on the actual volume of air for a big relaxed sound.

Low-Mid Range Intervals (Sachs)

Breathe when necessary. When breathing, take a two eighth-note rest at the bar line, then proceed to the next tone. Use your air with increasing efficiency, eventually extending the number of bars you are able to play correctly with one breath. When working with intervals, avoid telegraphing (i.e. foreshadowing) the direction you are heading. Concentrate on propelling the air through the entire duration of the note you are coming *from* in order to set up the note you are traveling *to.* Rest 3 counts after each study.

Herseth:
Say 'tay' on the lower register to get away from the tubby sound. Increase air on the lower register. Notes D and B are good examples of lower register notes with a good sound.

Articulation (Sachs)

Place all notes deliberately and solidly, <u>presenting the tone with clarity.</u> Focus on a good balance between tone and articulation. Lead the short duration notes to the longer duration notes (i.e. targeting).

Herseth:
Tonguing needs to be 5% consonant and 95% vowel. Too much tongue inhibits air flow. Use NO more tongue than in ordinary speech. Overlap single tonguing speed with double and triple speeds.

Herseth:

Melodic playing is very, very important. Know the importance of TONE, even in technical passages. Practice solos much more than drills or exercises for tonguing. Every time Bud learns a new solo or etude adds new sparkle to his playing. Vocalize through the horn. Get a message across to the people – tell them a story an interesting one. THINGS THAT YOU DO NOW WILL BECOME CONSISTANT LATER AS YOU APPLY CONCEPTS. Practice all forms of tonguing; only use legato for extreme double and triple tonguing, to make sure the tongue is moving very fast. Slur all technical passages first so you get the tones in mind. First and foremost is tone and musicality. In slow playing, the tongue and fingers still move quickly. Practice all types of literature for tonguing anything and everything. Petrouchka, Schlossberg 18, etc.) Do interval studies (all types of articulations). Accent is not more tongue, accent is more AIR.

Lip Slurs (Sachs)

Strive for an even, centered sound and smooth connections as you travel between the different registers on all lip slur exercises. Make sure the upper register doesn't become pushed but is merely a natural outgrowth of the lower range. Conversely, take care that the lower range notes don't sag or spread when moving downward from the upper register. Use natural tongue movement to assist the airflow in creating a smooth, even sound.

Herseth:
Keep slurs smooth, don't jolt them – they are easy.

Clarke Studies (Sachs)

Keep your air stream relaxed and linear, yet focused. Add articulation clearly and consistently throughout the following exercises while using the same air support you initially set in place. Learn the exercises in all keys and solidify them with repetition.

Add speed only after you can play each study correctly at a slow tempo. Play these studies with a soft to medium dynamic range. For all studies it is helpful to follow a slurred then tongued procedure. The 2nd study can be changed from major, to minor, to whole tone.

Scales (Sachs)

Scale study should be a regular part of daily practice. Alternate slurred and tongued studies. Think of playing the scale with the airflow similar to that of a longer, single note, while increasing the air stream as you pass through one note to the next. Add articulations clearly and consistently while riding the same linear air support that was initially set in place. Explore all keys, major and minor, all dynamics, all tempos, and a variety of articulations.

Arpeggios (Sachs)

Make sure all notes are centered in their given slots as you travel from one interval to the next, regardless of note length or context. Strive for an even tone throughout the different registers. Think of playing the arpeggio with an air flow similar to that used on a longer single note, while increasing the air stream as you pass through one note to the next. Let natural tongue movement assist you while traveling through different ranges. Occasionally, stop on a random note to check for correct intonation in context. Arpeggios are helpful in increasing range and flexibility. Aim for a full-bodied, well-centered tone in the lower register and extend that same sound to the upper notes.

For greater skill practice arpeggio exercises with different triadic inversions.

Herseth:
Play arpeggios to get all ranges to sound good, by being in tune and listening to the sound. Play studies like singers would.

Chromatics (Sachs)
Concentrate on even rhythm and strong fingers. Vary articulation, rhythms, and tempos. Focus on using the air in a horizontal manner. Hear every note solidly, regardless of tempo. Occasionally, hold the lowest and highest note with a short fermata for air stream and intonation purposes.

Broken Thirds (Sachs)
Apply variations as appropriate.

Octaves (Sachs)
Think of the octave interval like you would think of playing two identical notes in the same octave. An 'a' is an 'a' regardless of the register. Let your ears help you center the notes in their proper slots and guide your intonation when shifting up or down the octave.

Low Articulation (Sachs)
Do not neglect the low range below the staff. The neglect shows itself in unclear articulation and/or a tubby, overblown, out o tune, un-centered sound – if the note speaks at all. More air support is needed in the lower register, but notes should not spread or sag. When starting a note in the lower register, think a bit wider with your tongue and air; yet retain a centralized air column. Avoid collapsing or folding the embouchure. Keep the embouchure similar to that when playing in other ranges. If you can achieve solidity and clarity in the lowest range, then the upper harmonics will be easier. It is important to make sure that you can negotiate the lower range with the same agile and tonally centered approach that you use in the other registers. Work at it until you are not only comfortable in the low range, but able to move easily throughout a wide range

(from low to high or vice versa) in any configuration of scales, arpeggios, intervals, or musical contexts.

Start slow with an easy dynamic. Vary speeds.

Descending Half Steps (Sachs)
No comments offered.

Timing Drills (Sachs)
Place all notes deliberately and solidly at a slow tempo. With a steady rhythm, your air and tongue need to work together, to create each note with clarity and center. Both the air and tongue function in balance with one not overshadowing the other. Breathing in rhythm is also helpful. Aim for an even, consistent sound and articulation placement throughout the different ranges. Expand the exercises to include all keys. Explore wider registers as is productive. Vary articulation, dynamics, and note lengths.

With focused air and solid articulation, move through the different registers, strongly setting things in place ("sitting" on each note). Transpose these exercises

to all keys and use different intervals that are comfortable and productive. Both air and articulation work in tandem to\create an even, consistently placed sound throughout the different registers. Explore a variety of dynamics while maintaining the same clarity and placement.

Note Bending (Sachs)
Move air efficiently to create the half-step change without using the valves. Initially, work on the half-step note bends very slowly, feeling the change from one note to the next, almost as if you were using a trombone slide. Gradually quicken the changes, eventually making the half-step "bend note" sound like the original tone, while keeping the note centered from one to the next. Done correctly, you should feel a "sweet spot" where the bend note centers. Make note bend changes in tempo. Keep embouchure movement to a minimum in order to facilitate the half-step bend using forward air movement and a slightly higher tongue position to help (think tah-EE-yah). Use a fast, relaxed air flow for the initial half-step change, yet be careful not to over-blow. When you return to the original pitch after the note bend, you should feel better resonance and a more relaxed, centered tone. Half-step bending gives you more flexibility within the note slot. This concept is very useful in adapting to intonation fluctuations that occur in ensemble playing.

Range (Sachs)
Sachs does not specifically mention range, though he introduces range in many of his studies.

Herseth:

Play tunes in high range, also practice picking off high notes for practice. Remember shaky high note playing can be due to letting up before hitting the note—rather take the lump and blow, that is the only way to be great. If you let up on all notes, endurance is lost, and the overall sound is sickening. There is nothing wrong with your chops, your mind is messing them up. High register playing is no more physical than low register playing. It should be as easy, and just as good. Don't make such an issue of it. This habit must be worked out and eventually it will go away. However, there is only one way to get rid of this bad habit, and that is to apply correct concepts every day in your playing. Don't think mechanics at all on the high range studies, just play and listen. High range is not a separate part of trumpet playing, yet most players make a big deal of it. It

is not any more physical than any other aspects of trumpet playing, rather it should be just as musical. Just move the air more and keep a good sound, and it will always be there. For high range, just use good air flow, with ease of middle and low registers. To have good range, you must have good pedals. The reason: more and better vibrations producing more harmonics and a richer sound. Pedal chart fingers: C – open, B – open, Bb- 2, A-2, Ab – 1, G – 12, F# - 23, F – 23 Eb – 123. Play pedals on Both Bb and C (harder on Bb). Do pedals from the octave above so you are relating from a good note to a pedal note.

On Melodic Playing (Herseth)

Melodic playing is very important. Know the importance of TONE, even in technical passages. Don't think, just ply beautifully. Your ear will tell you and do all the work for you if you allow it to do so. Don't try to place notes, but let them go where they want. Play everything from excerpts to pop tunes. Remember we are playing these, not practicing them. When encountering problems, technically or musically, sing them and play them on the mouthpiece. Then transfer this singing to the horn. Also, add words for added expressiveness, and sing these words through the horn. When a person sings, he does so in a naturally musical way. Vocalize through the horn. Get a message across to people-tell them a story, an interesting one. Picture the whole phrase for you begin to play. Do this all the time. Every note must have direction –always must be going somewhere. Practice a tune in all registers frequently. It will tell you if you are using the right concepts. Also, related to this… balance the practice of music to exercises. Don't avoid playing music in favor of exercises. For etudes work them up slowly and get them clean. Then speed up. Play melodies when you work on the high pitched horns. Play a melody on a high horn and then pick up the lower pitched horn and play the passage the exact same way. You will forget which horn is which. On orchestral excerpts – listen to the recordings and study the scores. Bud believes listening is a great teacher! Remember interpretations differ…find more than one recording. On auditions. Don't "audition," rather offer the music that is in you. If they like it fine. If not, go somewhere else. If you get excited, apply it to the music. Your goal is to play to the level of the great player you aspire to be not to have a particular job.

Warm-Down Exercises (Sachs)

The warm-down is an essential part of your conditioning program and routine. Whether finishing a normal session of playing or a strenuous performance, the

warm-down loosens you back up and refocuses your tone production mechanism so that stiffness is less likely to be present the next time you pick up the horn. Never put the trumpet away after a particularly demanding session without playing a few "feel-good" exercises to re-center things. You need to stretch and loosen up before ending the day's work. A warm-up helps endurance and keeps your lip feeling fresh more often.

Suggested Warm-up Sequences (Sachs)

A @ 20 minutes = 1 Buzzing, 15 Note bending, 6 Clarke Studies
B@ 25-30 minutes = 1 Buzzing, 2 Long Tones, 3 Low-Mid Range Intervals, 4 Articulation, 5 Lip Slurs

C@40-45 minutes = 1 Buzzing, 2 Long Tones, 3 Low-Mid Range Intervals, 4 Articulation, 5 Lip Slurs, Clarke Studies 2-4 (low G to C registers)

D @ 60 minutes = 1,2,3,4,5, 6, 7 Scales (Low G to C), 8 Arpeggios (maj/min low C down to F#, 9 Chromatics Low G to Low C), 10 Broken Thirds Low G to Low C, Octaves I, 12 Low articulation (5s and 7s), 13 Descending Half-steps Ia-Id, Timing Drills II, Note Bending I and II.

Chapter Two: Arban Exercises (Sachs)

Michael Sachs provides the original Arban study followed by a series of variations on the exercises. The variations form a series of building blocks that evolve into the original. I recommend working through several bars from each variation successively, then playing through the original Arban exercise. Vary the tempos.

Articulation (1-7)

Your air and tongue need to work together to present the tone with clarity. Practice throughout the entire range of articulation, from a soft (floating a note) to a strong sforzando. Articulation creates the appropriate inflection and character for a given note or passage. Aim for a centered placement of the note that does not overshadow and dominate the tone. Well-timed balance between air and tongue is essential to create a full tone that speaks immediately. Regardless of length, all notes need to have a full tone.

Keep articulation light, clear, and consistent throughout these exercises. With economy of motion, think of the tongue riding a relaxed, supportive air column. Avoid using the tongue to stop or release the air. Holding your air unnaturally before releasing it to start a note can lead to unwanted tension or slapping a note unnecessarily. Concentrate on efficiency of tongue movement. Using the concept

of keeping the "tongue in" (forward) will help your speed, clarity, along with creating an easy, centered beginning to the tone.

Lip Slurs (8-9)
By placing a long tone on the first written note before starting this exercise, the air stream is properly set and focuses your thoughts on a linear motion. Use natural tongue motion (tah-ee-yah-ee) to assist the air in creating a smooth, even sound and connection between the notes. The proper air support will keep unnecessary pivoting to a minimum and connections between notes even, also increasing efficient tongue movement and speed.

Gruppetto (10)

No comments are provided. The original exercise is provided along with 3 variations.

Intervals (11)
Maintain correct air movement and support to play intervals properly. Focus on blowing all the way through the note you're coming *from* rather than worrying about the note you are traveling *to.* Work to avoid telegraphing (foreshadowing) the direction you are heading. In large intervals there is a tendency to leave the first note prematurely and leap to the 2nd note. In slurred intervals, concentrate on air movement between the notes for a more seamless connection. When you set up the air correctly, traveling between wider intervals will be easier and more efficient, sounding smoother and more centered.

Multiple Tonguing (12)
Practice multiple tonguing very slowly and methodically at first. Make sure all notes sound even in tone, presentation, and rhythm. Accent the different syllables with the goal of producing a more even sounding group when played up to speed. Matching the clarity of the T and K syllables is the goal. Work your double and triple-tongue comfortably at a speed slower than your fastest single

tongue; there needs to be an overlap between your fastest single tongue speed and your slowest double/triple tongue speed.

Be careful to not place the acquisition of speed ahead of proper air support. This will result in tonguing that sounds tight and uneven, with a thin tone. When correctly applied, a solid relaxed air stream behind the articulation will enhance speed, flexibility, and sound quality. With this linear air movement in place, the tongue can move more freely, allowing the tone to be fuller and the articulation to be clearer, faster and more controlled.

Chapter Three: Solo Repertoire (Haydn&Hummel Concerti) (Sachs)
Skeletal Structures

A passage is stripped down to its bare foundation or "skeleton" of airflow and shape. Setting up the air stream horizontally allows you to blow through the musical line more efficiently, avoiding leaping and wasted energy. This creates the direction of the line and helps to expand the range of character and color in the tone. The skeletal model will help create musical signposts that you can aim for as you travel through a phrase.

Telescoping Intervals

By taking notes that are separated by wide intervals and moving them into the same octave, you bring notes of a passage onto a more even plane. The concept helps to set up the airflow in a linear manner and lines up relative intonation in your ear. Once the shape of the air stream is in place insert the written notes. Work towards an efficient, effortless feeling while traveling between the wide intervals. Approach intervals with the same confidence you would employ in playing a scale. Employ a smooth, even air stream for best results. The intervals will pop out more easily and will be better centered in their slots.

Closing Thoughts

The knowledge we gain from mentors, teachers, colleagues, and recordings etc. is stirred together to create our own personal ideology and approach to music-making. When we are open to all kinds of ideas, we are more likely to remain aware of what's going on around us, often finding new and unexpected solutions to old problems. The final product we receive as trumpeters and musicians has everything to do with the process we use to get there. Likewise, the process we use to reach a goal is greatly dependent on the final product we envision.