

Help for Your Brass Players

Guiding Your Young Brass
Players to Success!

in inceptum finis est

*The beginning
determines the end.*

French Horn



Ideal Horn Beginners or “How to Avoid a Lot of Headaches Later”



Confident

Able to focus and
concentrate

Strong work ethic

Ideal Beginners-Personal Traits

Good student-above average reading level

Check standardized tests if possible

Piano experience (2+ years) or choir

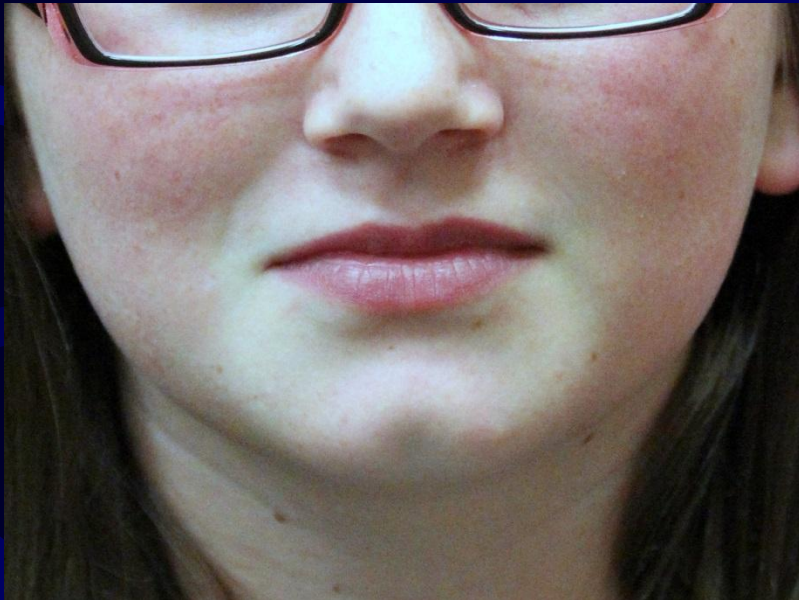


Ideal Beginners- Physical Traits

Average to
thin sized
lips



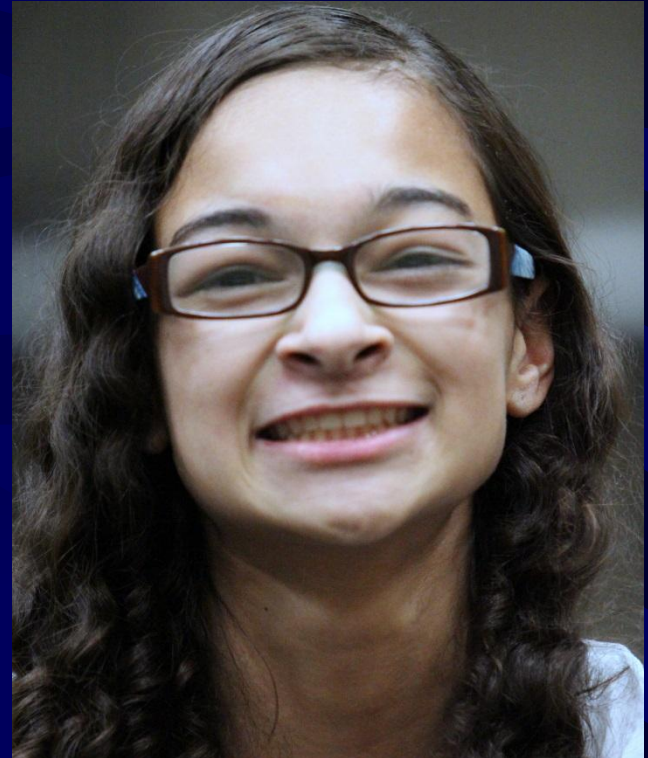
Ideal Beginners- Physical Traits



Same size top
and bottom
lips

Ideal Beginners- Physical Traits

Straight teeth



Ideal Beginners- Physical Traits

Little or slight
overbite



Produces buzz
easily

Ideal Beginners- Physical Traits

Flat chin and
firm corners



All Brass Instruments

No part of the body should touch
any other part of the body.

Sit ready to stand up.

Physically “soft” body.

Head tall and “floating”.

All Brass Instruments

Hands should be in an open “C” position.

Back slightly arched-stick your belly button out!

Slightly below level horn angle.

Cornet/Trumpet











Trombone







Baritone/Tuba







...Back to Horn and General Brass Pedagogy

Body Position-Core

Begin with both
legs in front of
body



Body Position-Horn



Lift horn and
slide right leg
to the side

Body Position-Right Leg



Right leg set to
the right of the
body at a 45
degree angle

Body Position- Bell

The bell should
rest on the center
of the leg and run
parallel to the
player's inseam



Body Position-Left Leg

Left leg directly
in front of
student, knee
facing music
stand



Body Position-Arms

Left arm aligned
with left leg

Left elbow
dropped and
relaxed



Body Position



Shoulders
level

Back slightly
arched

Body Position

Lead-pipe
should be a 45
degree angle
down from face



Hand Positions

Left palm below
the valves



Left fingers
resting flat on the
keys

Right Hand Position

Right hand
fairly straight
with all fingers
touching



Right Hand Position



Right hand
pressed against
far bell wall-no
further in than
knuckles.
(Tape Trick)

Right Hand Position

To lower
pitch-close
right hand
slightly



More fun with the right hand...

Characteristic tone

Lowers pitch by $1/4$ step

More hand contact produces darker color of sound

Stopped Horn -Briefly!



Right hand
closes and seals
the opening to
produce a
brassy tone

Stopped Horn-Briefly!

gestopft, stopped, bouche, chiuso, +

Play only F horn-no trigger

Play 1/2 step lower than written

Use a stopped mute in mid or low
range

Mouthpiece Placement

Must always
cover the top of
the upper lip

Must never go
below the lower
lip



Mouthpiece Placement

Center on mouth as
it is most
comfortable



Leave the lips on
the mouthpiece and
breath out of the
corners to increase
accuracy

Embouchure

Flat chin

Firm cheeks

Firm corners



Embouchure

Both lips buzz

Center of lips should remain flexible and soft enough for an even and steady buzz

Test with “Free Buzz”



Embouchure



Jaw must be dropped
and pushed forward to
align lower and upper
teeth

Teeth (molars) must
be apart (mouthpiece
test)

Embouchure-Low Range

The only range that calls for a noticeable difference in the appearance of the embouchure is the extreme low



Air Stream/Breathing



Air = Tone
Quality

70% air
30% embouchure

Use of Air

Low range-
slower air/buzz, warm air

High Range-
faster air/buzz, cold air

Air Stream/Breathing

Full, relaxed breaths

A composite and connected process



Air Stream/Breathing

Open and relax
throat with
breathing
exercises

mouthpiece
breathing

breathing tube

practice mute

Changing Pitches

Higher Notes

Blow colder and faster air

~Hand Test

~Use mph

~Hissing

Higher Notes

Faster Buzz



~Juicier

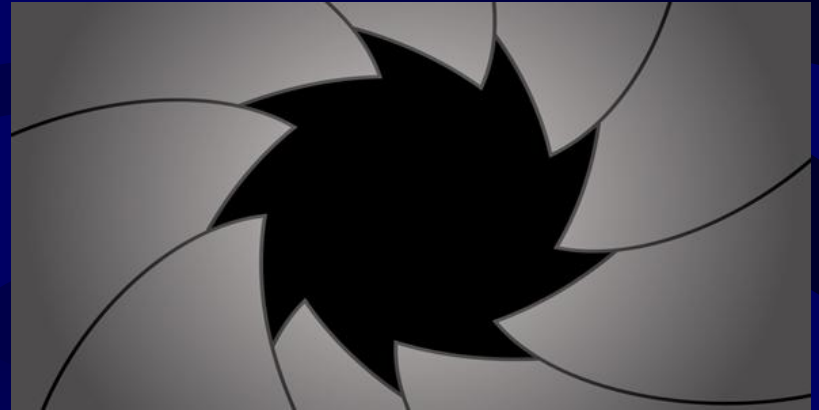
~"Spittier"

~Speedboat

~DEMONSTRATE

Higher Notes

Increase firmness
of embouchure
from all four
corners toward
the center



Higher Notes

Raise back of the tongue (khee)

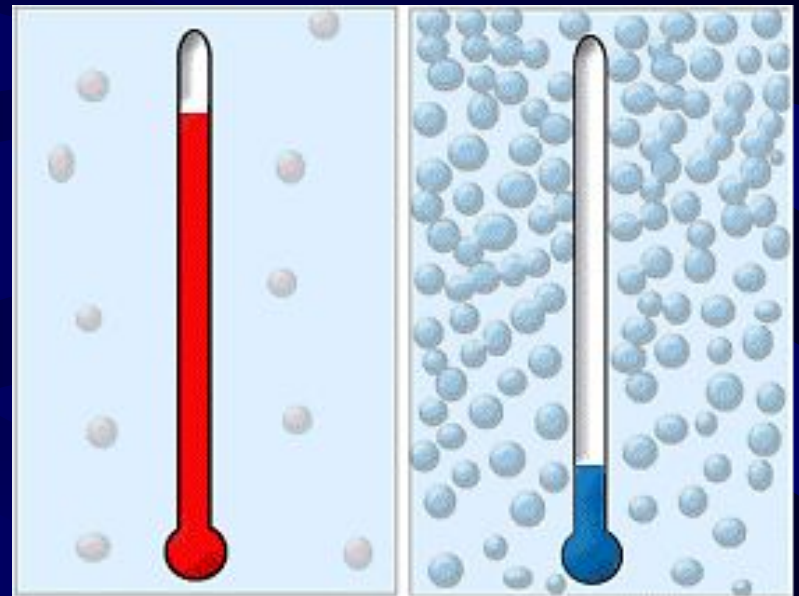
Direct the air-stream

Focus the air

Changing Pitches

Lower Notes

Warm Air



Lower Notes



Drop the Jaw
(toh)

Slow down the
buzz

Lower Notes

Push lower lip
forward into the
mouthpiece

Focus on lower
lip buzz



Accuracy

Hit an isolated note correctly, remove mouthpiece from lips, repeat 10x

Buzz note/interval-play-repeat

Accuracy

Hum or sing note/interval

Play in **SLOW** motion-hold each pitch

Isolate measure by measure

Accuracy

Focus on CONSISTENT and
correct embouchure and tongue
placement

Accuracy

When in doubt...

Remove water from horn even if
it is not “clicking”!

Developing Tone

A characteristic tone is possible in a young player if they are given the correct tools!

Tools for Tone ~ Loud Is Good!

You will have much stronger players if you encourage young students to always play on the side of LOUD.

Make them understand that it must be with a good tone.



Tone

It is VERY difficult to play loud with a good tone and NOT use correct air.

You can always turn down the volume...

but you won't want to!

Buzz Extension & Resistance Piece

Attaches to
instrument (leave
on at all times)

Allows for feel of
horn while
buzzing



B.E.R.P.

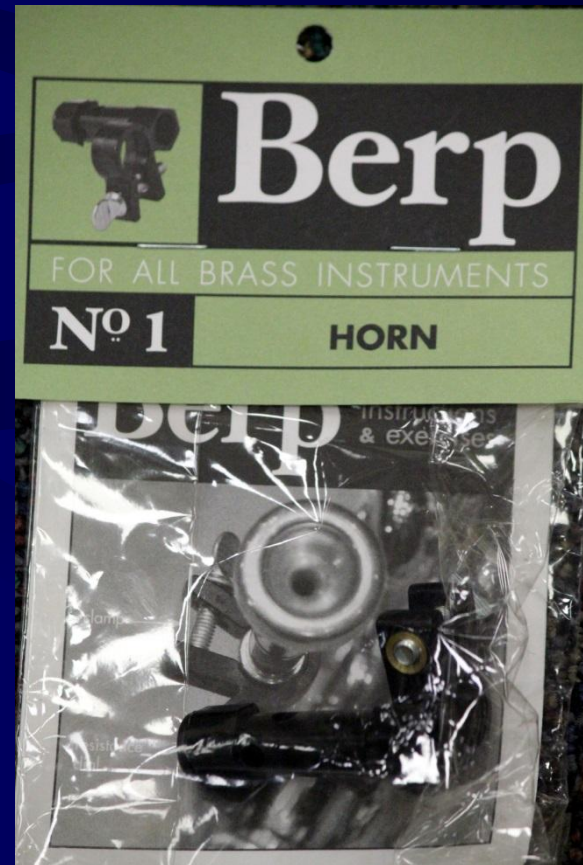


Students should
buzz all exercises
or “licks” that are
difficult ~ and
even those that
aren’t

B.E.R.P.

Buzz should be loud
and strong and should
be an actual pitch with
tone

Available for \$20



Tools for Tone

Practice Mute

Removes
Tension/Stiffness

Increases Intensity



Practice Mute

Creates resistance
for maximum air
velocity

Increases accuracy
by making the
embouchure work
for precision



More Tools for Tone

- Free Buzzing
- Embouchure Visualizer
- Mouthpiece Work
- Lead-pipe only w/ tuning slide removed
- Mirrors
- Create a sound with and without the tongue-”toh” vs ”pooh”

Range

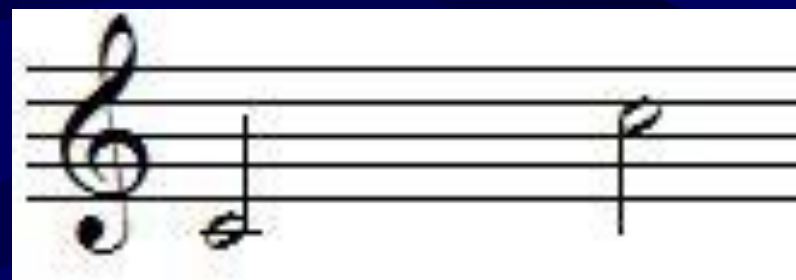
Low

Middle C & down



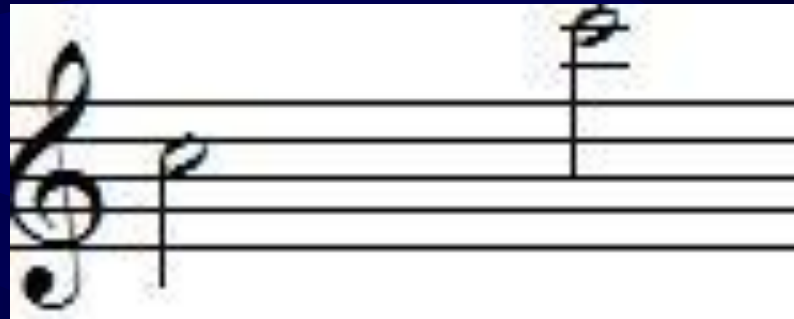
Middle Range

Middle C to C in staff



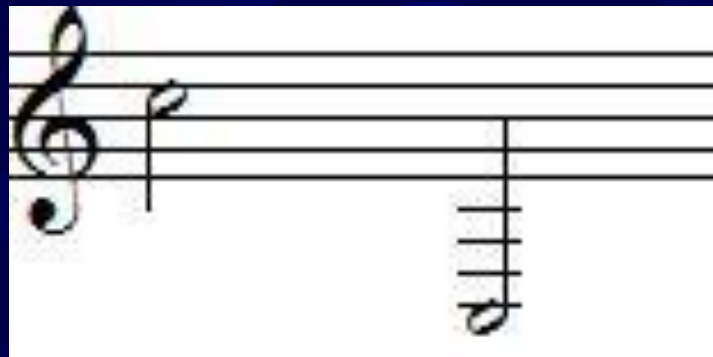
High Range

C in staff to C above staff



Development of Range

Year 1-low C to C in staff



Year 2-low C to E in staff



Development of Range

Year 3-low C to High G



High School-full range



Articulation

Tip of tongue releases

Drop the tip of the tongue

Start with tongue against roof of mouth-once it is consistent, move tongue lower-behind the top teeth

Articulation

- Use only the tip
- The more use of the tongue, the more air needed
- Toh, doh/duh ,loh
- Isolate away from horn

The Double Horn—what's the deal?

Single F Horn

- beautiful tone
- warm sound
- very “close” high notes
- tight tone in high range



The Double Horn

Single Bb Horn



- brighter tone in middle range
- “wider” notes in high range
- full tone in high range

The Double Horn!!



- Combines F and Bb horns
- Thumb trigger enables both horns to be used efficiently
- Increased accuracy and better tone quality
- F fingers: low G-middle G
- Bb fingers: Low F and down, middle G# and up

Tuning

Second line G on F horn

Third space C on Bb horn

Tune open pitches first, followed by 2nd valve (F#, B), 1st valve (Bb, F), 1&2 (A), 2 & 3 (Ab, C#)

Tuning



Know which is the main slide for Bb and which is the main slide for F

The first valve Bb slide on Conn 8D's must be pulled out 1 1/2 inches min.

Tuning Slides

F horn tuning slide bypasses the Thumb Key and goes directly into the front valves

Bb horn tuning slide usually feeds into the Thumb Key Valve Casing.

Muting

Muted, mit dampfer, con sordino

Hang mute from string around wrist

Play louder than dynamics indicate

Tuning may also be sharp

Section Set-Up

Place the 1st horn on the right (conductor's right) side of the section so bell faces section

2 1/2 feet between each player



Section Set-Up

Double the lowest parts when extra players are available (4th, 2nd)



If 1st & 3rd/2nd & 4th have the same parts, place together

Where to place the horns in the ensemble

- Beg.- 8th grade
 - Place Horns in front of Alto Saxes-they almost always have the same parts and the altos can help horns to hear the pitches, also allows for the easiest blend between the sections
 - Third row to the right of the conductor
- Advanced Players
 - To the back of the ensemble so the bell is clear of bodies
 - centered in the band
 - in orchestra, in the back row

Care and Maintenance

Slide grease

–Schilke (monthly)

Valve oil–

Blue Juice (weekly)

Rotor Oil–

Synthetic (monthly)



Care and Maintenance

Keep body clean
(daily)

Bath/flush
(annual)



Traughber JHS Equipment

Horns: Conn 8D, Holton H175, Jupiter

Mouthpiece: Farkas Medium

B.E.R.P.

Humes and Berg Practice Mute



...Nuff Said



Questions?

Please feel free to contact me!
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