

C Tuba Warm-Up

The primary reason for a daily warm-up routine is to reinforce and strengthen the fundamentals of sound production; being able to take a full breath in a reasonably short amount of time, establishing and maintaining a robust flow of air, and maintaining a strong embouchure that is able to derive the most from the air flow. Additionally flexibility and dexterity in the ability to transition from note to note of any musical passage, slurred and tongued, is developed. Long tones, lip slurs, and scales played both slurred and tongued are all part of an effective daily warm-up routine.

Getting Started; First focus on creating and maintaining a continuous flow of air by slurring a one-octave C major scale in eighth notes.



Play this several times to assure yourself that you are not inadvertently interrupting the air flow at any point.

Continue by playing the following long-tone exercise. Play it quite slow, observe the slurs and breathe on every bar line. Maintain the air flow with each slur. When taking a breath it is permissible to break the rhythm in order to focus on taking a proper breath.



Now repeat the whole process in the key of B-flat major. First play the scale with a continuous flow of air.



Now play the long-tone exercise. Again play it slowly while focusing on the proper use of your breath.



Now in the key of A-flat major,

First the scale,



The long-tone exercise,



Now in the key of G major,

First the scale,



The long-tone exercise,



F major,

Scale,



Long-tones,



Lip Slurs, You will now proceed to lip slurs starting with slurs between two adjacent partials. As in all playing situations, it's important to maintain a constant flow of air when doing lip slurs. The challenge is to avoid "pulsing" your air stream by articulating with your throat to facilitate the slur. Keep the flow continuous and steady and let the embouchure change the notes. With practice this becomes easy.



Start in open position, then 2nd valve, 1st, 1st & 2nd, 2nd & 3rd, 4th, and last 2nd & 4th. Each repeat sounding a half step lower than the previous. This is done with every lip slur exercise. Your ultimate goal is to be able to do this quite fast, almost like a trill. However, don't try to advance the speed to the point that you sacrifice accuracy.

As your abilities advance you will repeat this exercise on both lower and higher partials.



The last exercise is not technically a slur between adjacent partials; however, I include it in this category since the partial that exists between these notes is one that we try to avoid.



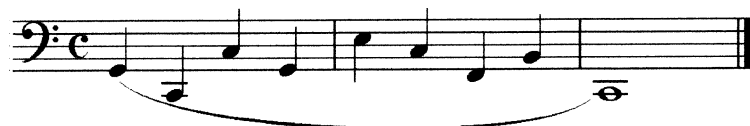
Now slur between more than two adjacent partials,



Slurring between non-adjacent partials; ideally you should be able to perform this exercise.



If you cannot then pick the one exercise shown below that most matches your ability then, over time work your way upward until you are able to perform the above exercise.



Scales; all major scales must be practiced every day. Each scale should be played twice, once slurred and then once again tongued with as many octaves as you can manage. When tonguing a scale use the same continuous flow of air that you used when you slurred it. Just use your tongue to cause a separation between notes. The reasons for practicing scales are many, not the least of which is “hard-wiring the key” into your brain. (Establishing neural pathways) Also scales are one of the better tools for developing range by adding octaves both in the lowest register and in the highest. In this regard it is important that you maintain a continuous flow of air even in the extreme ranges and never shift your embouchure in order to reach an extremely high or extremely low note.

Generally you would pick a note that is about as low as you can comfortably play and practice the major scale from that note with as many octaves as you can accomplish. Again you would practice this both slurred and tongued. Then advance upward a half step and practice that scale. Continue until you've practice all twelve major scales.

Minor scales; selected minor scales should be practiced every day. Rotate your minor scales from day to day so that over the course of four to five practice sessions you've practiced all three forms of each minor scale.