

Putting the FUN in FUNdamentals

When we sit down to practice, instead of starting immediately on our music, we need to warm-up and work on the foundation of our embouchure, tone, and fingers. Warming-up doesn't have to be boring, especially when we have a goal and reward system for practice. For every second you exhale your breath, every new low note you hold, or every new scale you learn, give yourself one point. At the end of each week, total your points and aim to get even more the next week.

The Exercise	The Goal	The Reward
<p>AIR Breathing in on "HOW" syllable for 2 counts, exhale for 4.</p> <p>Gradually increase exhale counts until maximum is reached</p>	<p>Increase awareness of your posture and develop habit of breathing deeply</p> <p>For an extra challenge while playing music, move the reed off-center. A crooked reed means MUCH more air is needed to create sound</p>	<p>When all your muscles stay relaxed and you think about breathing deeply, your sound will be pure and beautiful.</p>
<p>Mouthpiece / Neck Using a tuner, play on the mouthpiece trying to sound a concert A on alto, concert G on tenor, and concert D/E-flat on bari.</p> <p>If the tuner says A# or higher, make sure the jaw is relaxed and the corners of the mouth are not pinched. If the tuner says G# or lower, make sure the tongue position feels like "oo"</p>	<p>Keep embouchure steady (flat chin, corners in!), hold pitch without wavering</p> <p>After you're able to hold the concert A steadily for several seconds, try getting the pitch to go down by opening the throat (think "Darth Vader"), thinking "ah" with the tongue, and having "tumbleweed" air</p>	<p>Develop the perfect embouchure, airstream, and tone.</p> <p>Low notes? High notes? Big intervals? No problem!</p>
<p>Long Tones Play the written F Scale (on all saxophones) in whole notes at 60.</p> <p>Start on F above the staff and descend to F on the first space. Don't forget about the Bb!</p>	<p>No notes stick out as being louder or softer than their neighbors. Sound is full and steady</p> <p>For an extra challenge: add vibrato</p>	<p>Your ear will be able to recognize notes that are out of tune and/or a different timbre. By starting your first notes of the day in the middle of the instrument, your embouchure and lungs will thank you for warming them up!</p>

<p>Chromatic Descent Starting on middle C (on all saxophones), descend in half steps all the way to low Bb (A for bari saxes) in whole notes at 60.</p>	<p>Master the note names as your fingers move. Increase ease of response in the lower register</p>	<p>Low notes aren't scary : they just need love. When low notes are practiced diligently, they are MUCH easier to get out, and the rest of the saxophone's register is easy :)</p> <p><i>Every time you practice low notes, an angel gets its wings</i></p>
<p>Octave Jumps Starting on low C (on all saxophones), slur up to the middle C without changing your fingers. Use faster air to help the higher note come out</p> <p>For more resistant notes, try flicking the octave key to get the higher note to "pop". Then, quickly let go of the octave key and try to maintain the pitch</p>	<p>Keep slurs between notes as smooth as possible. Try to increase range with time</p>	<p>Low notes will respond better and large intervals will be smooth</p>
<p>Scales The 12 majors: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, Db, Ab, Eb, Bb, F</p> <p>Mastered all of these, young Jedi? Wonderful! How about two octaves? Minor scales? Arpeggios? Thirds?</p>	<p>Increase speed once notes are accurate and finger movement between notes is smooth</p>	<p>Better sight-reading, the ability to play faster without having sloppy fingers, certified saxophone-ninja status.</p>
<p>Vibrato With a metronome set to eighth notes at 60, play a written G above the staff. Saying "Ya" or "Va" into the saxophone, gently move the sound so it goes slightly 'under' and slightly 'over'.</p>	<p>Create even amplitude with minimal jaw movement. Ensure the embouchure, jaw, and chin stay steady and the pitch doesn't go flat</p> <p>Continue with different pulses and notes, moving to triplets and sixteenths over time</p>	<p>Music will have SO much more expression</p> <p>Note: this requires some experimentation. The more you listen to and try to match the vibrato of musicians you admire, the faster you will develop a steady vibrato of your own</p>