

Daily Practice Routine Instructions: *Video One*

Pat Walsh 2020

Posture and Breathing:

Sitting or Standing, hold yourself in a way that supports the weight of the saxophone the best. Long and tall posture with relaxed muscles. Head straight forward shoulders back with an open chest and don't lock those knees.

Keep your airway open by keeping an "AH" position to your throat while breathing in.

Breathing Exercise:

Practice this with one hand on your stomach and the other in front of you to feel the consistency of your airflow.

Set your Metronome to 60bpm

Exhale stale air!

Breathe in for 4 counts, and then out evenly for 4 counts.

Remember to make sure your stomach is expanding with each breath not just your shoulders rising.

Try to reach **full capacity** when you breathe in and to exhale all of your air when breathing out.

Now repeat this exercise concentrating on taking in full deep breaths and exhale all your air.

Next try putting several attempts back to back:

Breathe in for 4, exhale evenly for 4. Repeat

Breathe in for 3, exhale evenly for 3. Repeat

Breathe in for 2, exhale evenly for 2. Repeat

Breathe in for 1, exhale evenly for 1. Repeat

Daily Practice Routine Instructions: *Video Two*

Saxophone Posture:

Always bring the instrument to you, **never** chase or lean forward while playing the saxophone. Make sure the full weight of the instrument is on your neck and that you are not holding it up with your right thumb or resting the saxophone on your lip.

Keep arms relaxed and natural with your wrists natural and straight. Adjust your neck strap correctly! Too low or too high can affect your posture negatively.

Long Tones: Exercise A

Using everything we've learned so far concentrate on making your notes as even as possible. If you hear movement make a mental note of what caused it so you can fix it on the next note. We want big, even "bricks" of sound.

Start each grouping of notes with a good legato tongue and slur to the next note, concentrating on expelling your air evenly and steady with your best possible tone.

This exercise can be done over the entire range of the horn but you will get the most bang for your buck focusing on the lower register of your horn.

You should practice long tones everyday! Try them loud and soft but remember to keep the body relaxed and retain that good posture.

To take your long tone practice to the next level do this exercise with a tuner and try to blow your loud and soft long tones in tune. Some notes will be much easier than others but it is good to know the natural intonation tendencies of your instrument so that you can adjust while playing.

Daily Practice Routine Instructions: *Video Three*

Voicing:

An important part of playing the saxophone well, voicing can be described as how we hold and shape our mouth and oral cavity while playing.

When playing in our lower register we want a large oral cavity, relaxed jaw, and lots of hot air like you are fogging up a mirror. This should feel similar to when you sing a low note.

When playing in our upper register we want a smaller oral cavity, raised back of the tongue, and more focused air to support a fast air stream passing by the fast vibrating reed. This should feel similar to when you sing a high note.

Do not let the movement of our oral cavity and jaw affect your embouchure shape or tightness. Keep it relaxed and don't bite or pitch when going into the upper register.

Octave Slurs: Exercise B

Here is your chance to practice good voicing as we use the octave slur to exercise the concept.

It is important to maintain the same tone, volume, and timbre as we slur through each register.

If you notice that your upper register sounds thin as you slur into it try making small micro adjustments to improve your sound. Relaxing the jaw, taking more or less mouthpiece, and supporting your air with your diaphragm are some things to pay attention to while you are going through this exercise.

If your low notes don't resonate, open your oral cavity and keep that air steady as you blow.

To take this to the next level add a tuner and make sure you stay in good tuning as you are slurring through each register.

Exercise C

This exercise uses the same basic concepts as B but also helps to exercise the mind. Also as you are slurring down each arpeggio make sure your tone remains full and even in each register.

Here will go through almost every key. Remember to keep supporting your sound especially as we get lower in the saxophone's register.

Stick close to your metronome and when you're ready add a tuner to give you something new focus on while executing the exercise.

Exercise D

I call this the Chromarpeggio. Otherwise known as the Chromatic Arpeggio. It is important when warming up your saxophone to exercise the brain as well. For this we are slurring up one major arpeggio then shifting a half step down and slurring down that major arpeggio. In this exercise you will end up going through all 12 keys.

To take this exercise to the next level try it with all of the minor arpeggios. Or even mixing and matching by going up major and then down minor. The key is to keep the brain engaged and to not fall into a finger pattern.

Stick close to your metronome and when you're ready add a tuner to give you something new focus on while executing the exercise.

It is important to note to stay relaxed while playing these exercises. Your tongue, face, embouchure, fingers, hand, arms, shoulders, neck, back, legs, and all the way down to your feet should stay relaxed without holding tension.

Daily Practice Routine Instructions: *Video Four*

Overtones: Exercise E

Overtones are an advanced concept for the saxophone but you can start learning the basics now with a couple of short, easy exercises.

Proper voicing, tongue placement, and air support are essential for executing this exercise well.

We first finger the lower note called the fundamental. Then without adding the octave key you are going to voice the fundamental for the upper register of the saxophone. This should raise the note by an octave or the first overtone. Next you want to voice for the lower register and force the note back down to the fundamental pitch in your lower register.

This is a slow process and the lower our fundamental pitch the harder it will be to get the first overtone, or octave, to speak clearly. This exercise is good to practice both by tonguing each note and slurring each note.

Remember to hold out the overtone until it is clear and so we don't hear any of the fundamental low note in the sound before forcing it back down.

You may find that as you get lower that your overtone is not sounding at an octave, but at an octave plus a fifth. The fifth is the second overtone in the series but we want to concentrate on raising our note only by an octave.

Keep practicing and you will soon master what position your throat and mouth need to be in to make the overtones really sing.

Overtone Exercise #2

For this exercise instead of starting on the fundamental, try fingering the fundamental note but starting on the octave or first overtone. After playing a clear, clean note then force it down to the fundamental lower note.

When I do this exercise I start on low D and then move up chromatically. This exercise, although more advanced, can be completed the full range of your saxophone extending into the altissimo register.

Daily Practice Routine Instructions: Video Five

Saxophone daily technical and articulation exercises.

The accompanying sheet has 21 technical finger exercises that are progressive, meaning they get more challenging as we go. These should be played cleanly and with your concentration on great tone and good finger technique as you are changing notes.

Exercise #1: Finger mobility

For this exercise we are going to play each line at least two times. The first time we play through the line at a very slow pace at around 60bpm. All notes are slurred. This so that we can execute the notes perfectly while we are learning the music. Don't forget to play the repeat each time.

You should be thinking about each finger movement while doing this. Keep your fingers close to the pearls and be very aware of how you are moving. Try to move as even and cleanly as possible. Repeat as necessary.

The second time through you want to double your speed at 120 - 132 bpm. Still concentrating on executing each finger movement with precision and evenness. Listen carefully for any break down in your finger technique and if you hear any blips or unevenness try hard to make small adjustments to clean your technique. Slurring these will help expose your technique breakdowns at the higher speed.

Exercise #2: Adding articulations

Once you have played through these exercises or even to add on to the exercise as you go you can add different articulation patterns. This will keep your tongue and your fingers lined up and work that big muscle in your mouth.

First concentrate on adding a relaxed and light legato tonguing pattern to each exercise. Then you can try a staccato articulation. Keep the staccato light and don't let a heavy tongue slow you down. Don't accent and avoid a "tut" articulation when practicing technical exercises.

Again remember to stay relaxed. Don't tense up your embouchure or tongue and don't press into the reed when tonguing. Keep your articulation light and relaxed. If you hear yourself accenting the tongued portions, stop and take a moment to relax your mouth, and start over.

Below are different articulation patterns you can incorporate into this exercise.

Slur 2 Tongue 2

Tongue 2 Slur 2

Slur 3 Tongue 1

Tongue 1 Slur 3

All notes tongued