

# 7 Tips for Better Practicing

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Better practice habits  better performances

## TIP # 1

Keep practicing **BALANCED**. Don't practice solos or ensemble literature first or most of the time. Spend the longest amount of time practicing the **BASICS**.





Solos/literature

Etudes/targeted skill  
development

Basics-buzzing, long-  
tones, scales, range

Build on a  
strong  
foundation at  
the beginning  
of each day...

solos

Targeted/isolated  
skills

basics-  
buzzing, long  
tones, etc.

On the other hand, starting the day with solos and focusing on them produces the most insecure performance because it's unbalanced – like eating dessert first all the time. You'd get sick. Keep your playing strong and secure with a daily foundation of the basics.

## SO REMEMBER:

Solos/literature

Etudes/targeted skill  
development

Basics-buzzing, long-  
tones, scales, range

Build on a  
strong  
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## Tip #2

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It's not how much you practice

- A single 2-3 hour session per day won't produce as good results as

But how smart you practice

- A couple or three shorter sessions per day, each no longer than 45 – 50" is good for endurance and range development.

## Tip #3



<http://youtu.be/zZcgV0FLVYA>

Link to video of Bud's last CSO concert

REST AT LEAST HALF AS MUCH AS YOU PLAY, ESPECIALLY WARMING UP. If you must practice in big sets, compromise by taking 20" breaks every 45 - 50" of practice. Bud Herseth never practiced more than 45" at a time. Multiple smaller sessions rule.



# Tip # 4

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## Honesty is the best policy.

- Be honest with yourself, i.e., how much am I really practicing? How much of that time am I thinking about what I'm doing, and not mindlessly going through some routine or daydreaming? Am I strengthening my focus or losing it?

## FOCUS

- If you aren't focused on what you're doing, digging out of the inevitable hole you'll wind up in will take forever. Make the minutes meaningful. Praying/centering before your practice sessions is a great way to increase focus .



## Tip #5

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- There's no need to completely skip practicing for a week or two perhaps due to illness or travel/hotel constraints, etc. Take along your mouthpiece, and spend some quality time buzzing and focusing on relaxed free airflow. To use Bud Herseth as an example again, he used to take two weeks off every year to go fishing. The trumpet would scare the little fishies away, but apparently buzzing didn't so he would buzz each day. 15- 20" per day would work wonders. So don't fall down that never ending downward spiral of getting out of shape, followed by not feeling up to digging out. Just buzz your way through it.

## Tip #6

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- So maybe you didn't get Tip #5 in time and you're out of shape, and not too happy about it. Cheer up, there's a painless way to get back into things. Just take your time, and you can probably guess what to do first. Yep, buzz first. Day 1 – Buzz (Buzzing Method by James Thompson is great.); Day 2 – Buzz and Play; **TINGLING IS GOOD**- means your strength is coming back, but don't overdo. Rest until tingling subsides.; Day 3 – Buzzing and Long Tones (James Stamp, Vincent Cichowicz, any collection will do.); Day 4 – add in some scales with tonguing variations, and extend them to your highest note (try Clarke, Smith, Swisher, free online scales by Ken Saul, or just play from memory at least 4 -5 different ones); Day 5- Keep going, and see if you can top your high note, but if not, no worries, there's always tomorrow. Day 6 – You're on your way, bridge any gaps with buzzing.



## Tip #7

### KEEP A CLEAN HORN

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If you can't remember the last time you used those funny looking snake-like things that came in the cleaning kit, you're not alone. It's time to get down to the basement and put her in for a soak, without valves. Dish soap will do as a cleanser. Take all the slides out.

For weekly maintenance, gently blow water down the pipe. Hold onto that first valve slide or you'll get an unpleasant surprise. Take the valves out and inspect for green yuck. Clean/rinse with warm water and dry. Try not to get the springs wet so they won't rust.



# THE END...

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...of this week's edition. Stay tuned for more exciting tips to keep your chops responsive and your neighbors happy listening to you play!