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DAILY ROUTINE: THE KEY COMPONENT OF TRUMPET PRACTICE

BY JAMES T. MADEJA

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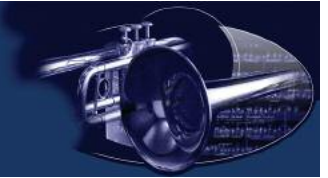
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DAILY ROUTINE: THE KEY COMPONENT OF TRUMPET PRACTICE

BY JAMES T. MADEJA

The typical practice day for most trumpet students consists of three basic components: warmup, daily routine, and repertoire. The warmup prepares the player to perform at peak level and handle the musical demands of the day. The repertoire component includes practice of the performance and performance preparation materials such as etudes, solos, excerpts, and band and orchestra music. Sandwiched between those two elements is the most crucial part of the practice session: daily routine. Daily routine consists of those studies and exercises designed to develop and improve basic performance skill—tone, flexibility, range, fingering technique, and tonguing technique. Daily routine, though not the most glamorous part of the practice day, is the component most responsible for the player's individual development and should never be overlooked, regardless how time-limited a practice session may be.

Daily routine exercises begin early in a player's development. Elementary instrumental method books often incorporate elements of daily routine into weekly lesson material. In Book 2 of the *Breeze Easy Method*, for example, every lesson begins with either a long tone or a lip slur exercise. Private teachers build daily routine into weekly practice assignments often without referring to the exercises as "daily routine." The flexibility exercises in books by Earl Irons and Walter Smith, the finger drills in the Clarke *Technical Studies*, and the tonguing studies in the Arban and Vizzutti methods are all part of daily routine.

Over time, daily routine becomes progressively more complex as the student develops a greater technical command of the horn. At some point in the player's development, daily routine focuses as much on the maintenance of already acquired technique as it does on the development of new skills. For this reason, the developing trumpeter may find it useful to catalog the daily routine studies encountered during the course of his or her development. By generating databases of exercises in

tone, flexibility, range, fingering technique, and tonguing technique, the player builds a personal collection of studies in each of the five areas. As the player learns to become his or her own teacher, the player then chooses specific exercises for each day of practice. Some exercises may be so valuable that they are practiced every day. Others may be rotated over two or three days. Still others may be

reserved for special circumstances (e.g., feeling tight at the start of a practice session). The regimen of daily routine exercises is likely to vary from individual to individual; an exercise that one player finds invaluable may be only marginally helpful to another player.

The databases serve three fundamental purposes. First, they provide an extensive collection of quality technical studies and exercise material. Second, they reduce the likelihood that useful exercises will be forgotten over time. Third, if organized properly, they provide a logical sequence for teaching daily routine, should the player eventually become a studio teacher.

Regular and sustained practice of daily routine leads to greater ease and success in preparing repertoire. By establishing a practice plan that includes effective warmup, daily routine, and repertoire and by practicing all three components religiously, the player establishes a routine that offers the greatest likelihood for success.

About the author: James T. Madeja is professor of trumpet and music education at The Crane School of Music, State University of New York at Potsdam. From 1990 to 2002, he served as an associate editor of the *ITG Journal*.



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