

Extreme Makeover: Saxophone Edition, Tips and Fundamentals for the Middle or High School Saxophone Section

Dr. Adam Ballif, Assistant Professor of Music

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- **What parts of your saxophone section need a makeover?**
 - Air
 - Cold Air vs. Warm Air
 - Laser Beam Air
 - Band Dynamics and Air vs. Playing as a Soloist
 - TIPS for TEACHERS - AIR
 - Breath Builder and Long Tone Endurance
 - Students should play long tones at 60 in groups of 16 counts each day.
 - Long Tone Practice at Forte Dynamics
 - Playing at varied dynamic levels: Your air must be fast at all dynamic levels in order to maintain a clear tone.
 - Embouchure and Tongue Placement (voicing)
 - Top Teeth on Mouthpiece
 - Lower lip over bottom teeth
 - Drawstring corners. No smiling.
 - When breathing, teeth stay on top of mouthpiece, breathe through corners of mouth.
 - No puffed cheeks.
 - "EE" Tongue
 - TIPS for TEACHERS - EMBOUCHURE
 - Mouthpiece Pitch
 - A concert (Alto Saxophone)
 - G concert (Tenor Saxophone)
 - D concert (Bari Saxophone)
 - C concert (Soprano Saxophone)
 - Embouchure exercises
 - Octave skip followed by descending half step (with tuner)
 - Low Note Warmup



- Octaves, Fourths, and Fifths (from "Top-Tones for the Saxophone" by: Sigurd Rascher)

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- Lip Bend Warmup (Embouchure Flexibility)



- Do this pattern four times, each transposing up by one half step. (D, D#, E, F)
- Articulation
 - Tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed. "Tip to Tip"
 - There should be no throat motion or embouchure movement.
 - Air pressure should remain constant.
 - "EE" tongue needs to be maintained while tonguing.
 - Use syllabic cues to help students keep the back of the tongue high. Use "Lee" instead of "Tee."
 - Avoid "Anchor Tonguing"
 - TIPS for TEACHERS - ARTICULATION
 - How to Teach Proper Tonguing (8 Steps)
 - Find the tip of tongue, use fingernail.
 - Place tip of tongue on reed outside the mouth.
 - Bring mouthpiece in mouth, keeping the tongue on the reed.
 - Form embouchure.
 - Build air pressure behind the tongue - then release the reed.
 - Touch tip of tongue to tip of reed - *dent the sound*.
 - Repeat the above process but stop the reed with the tip of tongue.
 - Remove mouthpiece to check tongue placement.
 - Push ups for your tongue
 - Tonguing Rhythm



- Tonguing in 5's



- Tonguing in 9's



- Scales (slur)
 - Practice them slowly first, with a quarter note pulse = 60.
 - Then speed them up, with a quarter note pulse = 120.
- Arpeggios (slur)
 - Practice them slowly first, with a quarter note pulse = 60.
 - Then speed them up, with a quarter note pulse = 120.
- Thirds (slur)
 - Practice them slowly first, with a quarter note pulse = 60.
 - Then speed them up, with a quarter note pulse = 120.
- Articulation
 - Apply varied articulation patterns to your scales.
 - Practice at varying tempos each day, slow to fast. (ex. 88, 96, 104, 112, 120, 132, 144, etc...)

- **Practice Tips**

- Chunking
 - A way of grouping beats to practice fast passages. (Always practice with a metronome.)
 - Excerpt from "Flight of the Bumble Bee"



- Chunking - First Step

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- Chunking - Second Step



- Five Rhythms to Learn any Passage



Play triplets, but start on the 2nd note.



Play triplets, but start on the 3rd note.

Equipment / Setup

- Instruments
 - Yamaha YAS-475 (Intermediate) / Yamaha YAS-82Z Custom (Professional)
 - Selmer Paris Model 62 / Series III (Professional)
 - Cannonball Stone Series (Professional)
- Mouthpieces (Affect intonation, tone quality, and ease of play.)
 - Classical
 - Selmer C*
 - Selmer S80
 - Jazz
 - Ernie Northway
 - Otto Link
- Reeds - Affect tone quality and ease of play. "You are only as good as your reed."
 - Classical

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- Hemke, 2 to 3 (Beginner)
- Vandoren, 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 (Intermediate / Advanced)

Jazz

- Vandoren Java, 2 1/2 to 3

- Ligatures (Affect ease of play and reed response.)

Bonade

Vandoren Optimum

Metal vs. Material?

- Where to order from?

JW Pepper (Sheet Music)

Woodwind / Brasswind (Equipment)

- **Contact Information**

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