



Breathing Exercises

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Lung Expansion Exercise

The following exercise should help prepare the lungs for the controlled maximum inhalation needed to play a brass instrument. A brass performer should try to maintain a regiment of stretching along with breathing exercises like this one to reduce tension in the body as well as increasing lung capacity. In order to properly feel a open, relaxed breath, you could try breathing through a small PVC tube 1" in diameter.

Set a metronome at quarter = 60 or you may use a watch with a second hand.

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Inhale

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Exhale

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8
Inhale

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8
Exhale

1-2-3-4-5-6
Inhale

1-2-3-4-5-6
Exhale

1-2-3-4
Inhale

1-2-3-4
Exhale

1-2
Inhale

1-2
Exhale

1
Inhale

1
Exhale

Metric Breathing

When brass players work on breathing exercises, often they concentrate on increasing the lung capacity for inhalation. Another aspect of performing is connecting both the mind and lungs to maximized use of a single breath while still maintaining a beautiful open tone. This exercise was intended for that purpose. Here you have a series of time signatures in which certain beats are designated as inhalations and exhalations. Treat each of these exhalations as notes, you might even think of a middle Bb, and when you inhale concentrate on re-articulating that one note. Once you get accustomed to working with the exercise, try practicing by playing a Bb on the exhalations (always concentrating on the pitch). The last line is a good example of realistic breathing while playing a wind instrument.

Set your metronome to quarter = 70

1. 6/4 [(5-6) 1-2-3-4 (5-6) 1-2-3-4 (5-6) 1-2-3-4] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale.....
2. 5/4 [(5) 1-2-3-4 (5) 1-2-3-4 (5) 1-2-3-4] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale.... Inhale Exhale.... Inhale Exhale.....
3. 4/4 [(3-4) 1-2-3-4 1-2 (3-4) 1-2-3-4 1-2] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale.....
4. 3/4 [(3) 1-2-3 1-2 (3) 1-2-3 1-2] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale.....
5. 2/4 [(+) 1-2 (+) 1-2 (+) 1-2 (+) 1-2] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale Inhale Exhale Inhale Exhale Inhale Exhale
6. 4/4 [(3-4) 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4(a) 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4(a) 1-2] Repeat 2 times
Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale..... Inhale Exhale