

Explanatory Notes for Carmine Caruso Exercises

(while originally intended for brass performers, these concepts are excellent for any wind player)

1. Start your foot tapping before you play. This establishes the timing to which the various muscles must move.
2. Maintain mouthpiece pressure and placement and keep lip tension constant during rests. Keep setting until no notes are sounding.
3. Breathe through the nose so you don't disturb the embouchure.
4. The above procedures are for these exercises only. They should **NOT** be applied to other playing.
5. While practicing these exercises, try not to be music conscious. It is not necessary to strive for pitch, tone quality, or aesthetic results. These exercises are designed for muscular conditioning. All thinking should be directed towards timing.
6. When playing the interval exercises, go as high as you can until no notes are sounding. Be sure to complete any interval you start, regardless of the quality of sound. When you shut off, rest 30 seconds. Start from where you left off and go higher until no notes sound. This is called the second setting.
7. Disregard mistakes. Go on as if you are playing perfectly.
8. You learn from frequent repetition. Don't consciously 'fix' anything.
9. Synchronization and timing are the main goals.
10. All muscles in chops, hands, breathing apparatus, etc. must respond to musical and timing demands.
11. Don't stop as long as you have even a piece of a note.
12. Where there's smoke there's fire. Little notes will grow.
13. Don't think of any particular aspect of playing. Just play.
14. Exercises shouldn't sound like performance.
15. Use the most natural volume for you on the six notes and regular intervals.
16. Steady breath makes a musical sound. Inertia keeps air and chops or reed moving regularly.
17. Each note compliments the next. Don't set for where you're going set for the note you are playing now.
18. Good sound comes from synchronization of muscles.
19. Good timing solves all technical problems.
20. Breathe in rhythm.
21. Practice the whole body not specific parts.
22. When playing, we are dealing with body motions too numerous to mention. It is the synchronization of these motions that gives the desired results. Timing is of the utmost importance. Accuracy is the result of subdivision of the beat. Subdivide the beat immediately prior to any pitch change or articulation in to four sixteenth notes. All motion should occur after the fourth of those sixteenths.
23. It is not how fast you play, but rather how fast you change from note to note that produces clarity and clean technique.
24. Feel the upbeat as clearly as the downbeat.
25. The purpose of practice is to repeat a muscular activity until it is a habit
26. Breath intake and blow is a pendulum-like action.
27. The overblow indicates that you have more air power than your chops can harness.
28. You must train muscles to handle the overblow so you can use that power.
29. Don't make an issue over a mistake. It is already past.
30. Air speed alone determines volume. Slow air = soft. Fast air = loud.
31. Keep the blow constant so that the lips or reed can ride on the air stream with ease.
32. Don't do exercises on tired, swollen, or stiff chops.
33. Any stiffness which may result will go away as muscles begin to set up properly. You will eventually be tireless.
34. Rest 15 seconds before repeating lesson. Don't repeat on tired, fat, stiff chops.