

Transforming Trumpet Players Into Horn Players—Successfully!

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Step 1: Embouchure

- 2/3rds upper lip –or, in some cases, ½ upper, ½ lower will work
- MUCH looser and freer –trumpet players are typically very tight and sometimes roll the lip in. The lip must roll OUT and vibrate into the mouthpiece.
- Top lip does all the work –bottom lip is an anchor and should be stable but not rigid. Jaw motion can be a good thing for flexibility into the low range.

Step 2: Horn Angle

- must slope down –this affects tone quality and range.
- Leaves upper lip free to vibrate

Step 3: Left Hand position

- Left hand centered on body (not the horn centered on body) –horn exists from the center of the body, to the right side. No horn on left side of body.
- Below face –thus, sloping down.

Step 4: Right Hand position

- Swimmer’s hand or handshake with thumb ticked in
- At “two o’clock” in the bell
- Extends the tubing of the horn –intonation will ALWAYS be sharp if right hand is incorrect.

Step 5: Articulation

- Tongue further down –tongue where teeth meet for low range, where teeth and palate meet for upper range. No “la” attacks—always “ta.”
- Much more direct --should “ping,” or explode a bit on every attack. This will give clarity to articulation.

Step 6: Air/Tone Quality

- Much more indirect –spin air into upper lip.
- Ricochet air through conical bore
- Faster, warmer air
- Use only F side of horn for a while –avoid giving a fingering chart with B-flat side fingerings throughout the range.

Materials Needed

- *The Art of French Horn Playing* by Phillip Farkas, published by Summy-Birchard, Inc., distributed by Warner Bros. ISBN 0-87487-021-6
- Excellent fingering chart (can be found in the Farkas book)
- Low etudes/bass clef reading –suggestions: Gallay Etudes opus 40, Shoemaker Legato Studies, and Kopprasch 60 Selected Studies
- Qualified private lesson instructor –visit www.hornsociety.org or www.hornplayer.net for a list of private horn teachers in your area. Or, call your local college horn professor. He/she will guide you to the right person.

List of “Do’s” and “Don’t’s”

- Do let your new hornist sit to the right of your best horn player, so she can model his sound.
- Do give your horn students plenty of room in your set up, so that they can position the horn correctly.
- Do give your new horn player lots of low parts.
- Don’t encourage super high range in your new horn player.
- Don’t let them play trumpet for at least the first semester of the transition.
- Don’t chide them much for missed notes. Focus on tone quality.
- Don’t allow them to use trigger initially.

Pictures of Embouchures to Watch



Too Much Tension and Lower Lip

- Needs to move mouthpiece toward nose
- Needs to relax corners of the mouth



A Successful Transformation

- Looser, more relaxed face and embouchure
- Slight angle downward