

Extended Pattern



Clarinet Emergency Room: Solving Performance Problems in Your Clarinet Section



Baermann I



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Sponsored by
The Music Group

December 15th, 2004

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Thirds



Tonguing Practice - Option One



Tonguing Practice - Option Two



OUTLINE

Tone Quality	
Developing Focus.....	2
Common Problems with Suggestions for Improvement.....	3
Register Shift Exercises.....	4 & 5
Clarinet-Specific Warm-Ups.....	6 & 7
Technique	
Non Tonic-To-Tonic Scale Patterns.....	8 & 9
Articulation	
Exercises to Correct and Improve Tonguing.....	10
Common Problems with Suggestions for Improvement.....	11

Developing Focus

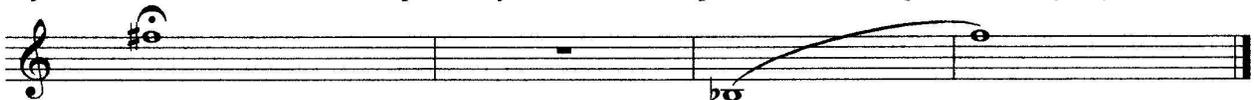
Your clarinet section must learn to play with focused sounds before any other issues can be addressed. You cannot tune or expect to develop technique without a focused sound. Teach sound concepts by having students play only on the barrel and mouthpiece. By eliminating variables, the player can more easily focus on sound production.

The barrel and mouthpiece assembly produces the note F# when the sound is properly focused. Beginning students can benefit greatly when adequate time is provided for sound development on the barrel and mouthpiece prior to assembling the entire instrument. Experienced students who play with poor tone quality may also benefit from barrel and mouthpiece practice.

Developmental Warm-up

The term "F# Embouchure" refers to the note that can be produced by the clarinet barrel and mouthpiece assembly when a focused sound is present. An unfocused sound on the barrel and mouthpiece assembly will sound much like a child's toy horn or "party favor". Using only the barrel and mouthpiece - without the complications of the entire instrument - allows students to concentrate on embouchure, air, and sound.

Play F# below on the barrel and mouthpiece only. Use a reference pitch tuner. Match pitch as closely as you can.



Play low B \flat on your instrument and then add the register key for F. Both notes should have the same focused tone quality. Do not let the clarion notes "pop" out. It is not necessary to change the breath support when changing registers.

Not Enough Mouthpiece Inside the Mouth

If the sound on the barrel and mouthpiece is unfocused and below F#, take in more mouthpiece until the pitch comes up. Too little mouthpiece inside the mouth can also produce sharp pitch among more advanced players. Too much mouthpiece inside the mouth will cause squeaking.

Top Teeth are not Gripping the Mouthpiece Firmly Enough

This is common among beginners and younger players. The clarinet embouchure is firm and the student must learn to not let the mouthpiece move around inside the mouth.

Tongue position is too low

The tongue should be high (HEE) and forward inside the mouth.

Embouchure Problems

Corners are Too Relaxed

The corners play a vital role in a correct embouchure. Tell the student to bring corners down and in, again much like the 'straw' analogy or as in saying 'ooh.' Relaxed corners contribute to spread tone in the middle register.

Bottom Lip is Too Loose

Tell the student to firm the bottom lip. **Avoid saying "make your chin flat"** as this may encourage a 'smiley-face' embouchure which can lead to a thin, sharp sound. Use the analogy of drinking a milkshake through a straw or putting on chap stick.

Not Enough Air

Air is always an issue. Let students practice everything at forte for one week. Tell them to blow until they feel resistance from the instrument. Students may be surprised to find that they have never felt 'back pressure' from the clarinet, a necessary bi-product of sufficient air.

Fast Air

Students with air support problems are often using slow air instead of fast air. The result may be a "fuzzy" sound due to lack of air speed and a relaxed diaphragm. The clarinet gets its best sound with quickly moving air.

Air Support Problems

Improperly Shaped Air Stream

A slow, weak air stream does not have the same shape as a fast air stream. Use the analogy of a garden hose. Describe the shape and speed of a 'jet' setting on a hose nozzle.

Register Shifts

While it is difficult to make generalizations about register response of the clarinet, most would agree that the more fingers down (closed holes, longer tube) creates a slightly slower the response; while fewer fingers down (open holes, shorter tube) creates a slightly quicker response.

A common problem often occurs in the transition from the Chalumeau to the clarion register. Clarion notes "pop" out uncontrollably because inexperienced players "blow harder" in response to the change in back pressure. It is not necessary to change breath support when shifting registers. Describe the air stream as fast, compact, and directional - much like the jet setting on a water hose.

Students should be taught to use the same embouchure and tongue position throughout the full range of the instrument. The tongue should be high, forward, and close to the reed at all times. Air should be fast and directional into the tip of the mouthpiece.

Register Shifts Example One

To focus the sound, try the following:

- 1) Use plenty of air! Air is almost always an issue.
- 2) Think "hee" when you play. A high and forward tongue position will produce the best sound.
- 3) More Mouthpiece inside the mouth. Beginners who use too little mouthpiece will usually get no sound or a very flat sound. More experienced players who use too little mouthpiece may play sharp. Too much mouthpiece can cause squeaking.
- 4) Top teeth "grip" the top of the mouthpiece.
- 5) Firm Bottom Lip: Practice holding a drinking straw with only the lips (as if your were drinking a milkshake) while looking into a mirror. The shape produced - firm bottom lip; corners down, in, and snug - is very close to the correct shape of the clarinet embouchure.

12 beats in one breath. Do as many measures as you can, adding on until you can play all of the intervals.
Keep tempo slow - 60 to 66. Slur everything!

Do not let the clarion notes "pop" out. They will not be helped by "blowing harder."

The image shows five staves of musical notation for a clarinet exercise. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The exercise consists of a series of intervals, primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with slurs indicating they should be played in one breath. The intervals are: G4 (labeled 'Fork'), A4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5, C6, D6, Eb6, F6, G6, Ab6, Bb6, C7, D7, Eb7, F7, G7, Ab7, Bb7, C8, D8, Eb8, F8, G8, Ab8, Bb8, C9, D9, Eb9, F9, G9, Ab9, Bb9, C10, D10, Eb10, F10, G10, Ab10, Bb10, C11, D11, Eb11, F11, G11, Ab11, Bb11, C12, D12, Eb12, F12, G12, Ab12, Bb12, C13, D13, Eb13, F13, G13, Ab13, Bb13, C14, D14, Eb14, F14, G14, Ab14, Bb14, C15, D15, Eb15, F15, G15, Ab15, Bb15, C16, D16, Eb16, F16, G16, Ab16, Bb16, C17, D17, Eb17, F17, G17, Ab17, Bb17, C18, D18, Eb18, F18, G18, Ab18, Bb18, C19, D19, Eb19, F19, G19, Ab19, Bb19, C20, D20, Eb20, F20, G20, Ab20, Bb20, C21, D21, Eb21, F21, G21, Ab21, Bb21, C22, D22, Eb22, F22, G22, Ab22, Bb22, C23, D23, Eb23, F23, G23, Ab23, Bb23, C24, D24, Eb24, F24, G24, Ab24, Bb24, C25, D25, Eb25, F25, G25, Ab25, Bb25, C26, D26, Eb26, F26, G26, Ab26, Bb26, C27, D27, Eb27, F27, G27, Ab27, Bb27, C28, D28, Eb28, F28, G28, Ab28, Bb28, C29, D29, Eb29, F29, G29, Ab29, Bb29, C30, D30, Eb30, F30, G30, Ab30, 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G329, Ab329, Bb329, C330, D330, Eb330, F330, G330, Ab330, Bb330, C331, D331, Eb331, F331, G331, Ab331, Bb331, C332, D332, Eb332, F332, G332, Ab332, Bb332, C333, D333, Eb333, F333, G333, Ab333, Bb333, C334, D334, Eb334, F334, G334, Ab334, Bb334, C335, D335, Eb335, F335, G335, Ab335, Bb335, C336, D336, Eb336, F336, G336, Ab336, Bb336, C337, D337, Eb337, F337, G337, Ab337, Bb337, C338, D338, Eb338, F338, G338, Ab338, Bb338, C339, D339, Eb339, F339, G339, Ab339, Bb339, C340, D340, Eb340, F340, G340, Ab

Register Shifts

Register Shifts Example Two

Register Shift Exercises

Keep tempo slow - Quarter Note = 60.

Slur everything.

Play each note with the same tone quality. Do not change anything when the register key is added. As you go above 'Thumb C', the back of the tongue adjusts to a slightly lower position to facilitate tone production.

Avoid an 'under-sound' by:
Keeping the tongue forward
Using fast air

A 'squeaking' high D is
usually caused when the
tongue is low.

Tone Quality: Clarinet Specific Warm-ups

A Need for Clarinet Specific Warm-ups

Clarinetists who participate in school band programs usually do some type of ensemble warm up in daily rehearsals. However, good individual warm-up techniques are sometimes compromised in ensemble settings in order to accommodate group objectives. Some band warm-ups are designed to build ensemble balance and precision, while others are designed to develop pitch accuracy and flexibility in the brass section. While a few of these warm ups transfer well to the woodwind section, many do not. In fact, the "lip slurs," (arpeggios that can be done with one valve on a brass instrument) can prove to be quite difficult, especially for the developing clarinetist who must deal with complex fingerings, note recognition, and register shifts.

The following warm-ups provide a clarinet specific alternative to traditional ensemble warm-ups. These types of warm-ups can be effectively utilized as individual practice routines or clarinet section exercises. Either way, the warm-ups presented here allow clarinetists to relax and concentrate solely on sound.

Warm-Up Example One

3

Slurred Arpeggio Warm-Ups

*Clarion note must not "jump out" at any time.

mm=60

simile

Warm-Up Example Two

Ascending Chromatic Warm Up

for developing steady tone, pitch, and endurance.

Play at the tempo indicated, never faster.

Breathe only where indicated.

Maintain **mf** dynamic throughout.

No changes in embouchure, airstream, or tone color between registers.

54-60 mm

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a dynamic marking of **mf**. The exercise is an ascending chromatic scale, starting on a middle C (C4) and moving up step-by-step through the notes: C4, C#4, D4, D#4, E4, E#4, F4, F#4, G4, G#4, A4, A#4, B4, and B#4. The notes are grouped into pairs of half notes, with a slur over each pair. The first pair (C4, C#4) is on the first staff, and the second pair (D4, D#4) is on the second staff. This pattern continues, with each pair moving up one staff. The final pair (B4, B#4) is on the eighth staff. The music concludes with a double bar line at the end of the eighth staff.

Technique: Non Tonic-to-Tonic Scale Patterns

In order to perform the more difficult grades of music, students must have excellent technical skill and control through the full range of the instrument at a variety of dynamic levels. Inexperienced students often falter or stop completely when faced with rapid step-wise passages. Non Tonic-to-Tonic scale patterns encourage students to recognize scale patterns within the music, regardless of the stated key signature.

Scale Patterns Example One

Non Tonic-to-Tonic (Extended) Scale

Start on Scale Degree One Start on Scale Degree Two

Playing in the key of C, but not tonic-to-tonic, more like a typical excerpt.

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Scale Patterns Example Two

Below is an example of a three-octave extended pattern for more advanced players. Once students have established good control in all registers, vary the articulation to include a slur two/tongue two. This is an intermediate step toward establishing a good all-tongued articulated sound.

The musical score for Scale Patterns Example Two consists of eight staves of music. Each staff represents one octave of a three-octave extended scale. The music is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The scale starts on G4 and ends on G7. The notation includes slurs and dashed lines to indicate phrasing across the octaves.

Scale Patterns Example Three

The musical score for Scale Patterns Example Three consists of three staves of music. Each staff represents one octave of a three-octave extended scale. The music is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The scale starts on G4 and ends on G7. The notation includes slurs and dashed lines to indicate phrasing across the octaves.

Articulation: Exercises to Correct and Improve Tonguing

Daily tonguing practice is essential for developing the ability to articulate.
 Start on the barrel and mouthpiece (F#) when diagnosing tonguing problems.
 Errors are more apparent when variables are reduced.
 The focused sound should not disappear when tonguing.

Option One is a good way to introduce tonguing to beginners:

OPTION ONE

HEE tee tee tee

Breath Start each whole note to establish a good sound first.
 While sustaining the whole note, the tip of the tongue touches the top of the reed to interrupt the whole note.
 Tongue should use minimal effort.
 Tongue high and forward in the mouth - close to the reed

To re-introduce tonguing to experienced students with articulation problems try Option Two.
 Use the same instructions as in Option One.

OPTION TWO

Option Three can be used to help develop speed as well as to correct "chewing" - embouchure movement.
 Speed is directly related to the distance of the tongue from the reed.
 Keep the tongue as close to the reed as possible to go faster.

OPTION THREE

Shorter Bursts of "5" notes will also work well. Longer bursts help to develop endurance.
 Also See articulated patterns under Non Tonic-to-Tonic Scale Pattern examples.

Common Articulation Problems

Heavy, Harsh Articulation

A bad articulated sound is generally caused by excessive motion of the tongue. Most students try too hard and move the tongue too much.

Use Option One to re-introduce a more gentle motion of tongue to reed surface.

- Breath start each whole note with the syllable 'Hee'.
- Lightly touch the tip of your tongue to the top of the reed - 'tee' syllable. Keep your tongue high and forward inside the mouth.
- Alternate speaking the exercise with playing the exercise. Pay close attention to how the exercise sounds when spoken. Is the air support strong and sufficient?

Scooped or Spread Sound on Articulated Notes

A scooped or spread sound on articulated notes is often caused by Embouchure Movement. Use Option Three to address this problem. Start the exercise at the absolute fastest speed that the student can go. It is very difficult to move the embouchure at fast speeds. Over time, work backwards to slower speeds until movement stops.

Inability to Articulate Clearly

The inability to articulate clearly may be caused from tonguing the bottom lip, the roof of the mouth, or tonguing only one side of the reed. The tip of the tongue (to the top of the reed) takes care of articulation. Use Option One or Option Two to re-introduce tongue to reed surface.

The tongue motion is the same for staccato as legato.

Paula Corley is a career music educator with 19 years of teaching experience in the Texas public school system where she taught beginning clarinet classes and developed her beginning clarinet method entitled "**So You Want To Play The Clarinet.**"

Paula has been a featured clinician for the Texas, Arkansas, and North Carolina Music Educators Associations as well as for the Texas Bandmasters and for The University of North Texas. In June, 2005 she will make her second appearance at the University of Oklahoma Clarinet Symposium and her sixth at Indiana University's Clarinet Teaching Workshop with internationally recognized teacher and performer, Howard Klug.

Currently Paula is Instructor of Clarinet and Music Education at Mars Hill College. She is Principal Clarinet with the Asheville Lyric Opera Orchestra and is an educational consultant for The Music Group, importers of Buffet Clarinets, and for Coda Music, developers of SMARTMUSIC intelligent accompaniment. She is a graduate of Mississippi State University (BME) and Southern Methodist University (MM), and has done postgraduate study at the University of North Texas. Her teachers include Dr. Warren Lutz, Stephen Girko, Dr. John Scott, and Dr. James Gillespie.

Her website - www.clarinetcity.com - targets skill development for advancing clarinetists and features audio clips of student groups, a question and answer forum, conference notes and clarinet teaching materials.

Examples in this handout are from **Daily Workouts for Clarinet** by Paula Corley available at music retailers.

Please send questions and clinic requests to: paulaclar@hotmail.com

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Paula Corley plays and recommends Buffet Clarinets.

Her current instrument is the TOSCA model.

All of her students play Buffet - R13, International, or E11.