

The Must-haves for Trombone
Collection directed by **Olivier LACHURIE**

Daniel LASSALLE

TrombOlympic
English Version

Welcome to... "Hell & a lot of Tough Slugging"



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The President's Message

There is an obvious family tie between today's trombones and their ancestor, the sackbut. Even the most renowned of symphonic repertoire requires an authentic interpretation of classical style and timbre, which can only be achieved with a practical knowledge of both instruments.

During the past number of years while teaching at Toulouse and Lyon, Daniel LASSALLE has demonstrated that there is a compatible technique with which to play these wonderful brass instruments.

This method provides an active way for trombonists to perfect their playing while at the same time furnishing an understanding between modern and ancient musical compositions.

Michel BECQUET
International Soloist
Trombone Professor at CNSMD
Lyon, France

Introduction

Hi my friends!

In my opinion, this document should have never existed. For me, it should have been sufficient to simply discuss necessary daily warm-up exercises with my students, but at the insistence of my fellow teachers I accepted to set out in printed form my ways and method of achieving a daily warm-up routine. You asked for it, so now get ready to suffer... a little pain to start with each day will reward you with the pleasure of personal achievement as you advance.

Have you ever asked yourself the question:

"What exercise should I begin with today? What should I focus on for best results?"

These are frequently asked questions by a lot of trombonists. Accordingly, the purpose of this guide is to help you organize your work and develop your own warm-up routines, no matter what your level or objectives.

The 'Mix & Match' Method - or 'Pick 'n Mix' Practice!

Here you have the freedom to choose your exercises from the four organised sections and in this way compile a warm-up routine tailored especially for you! Like a pair of bespoke running shoes, in the beginning they'll feel new and different, but quickly become the only ones you'll want to have.

I want to warmly thank Laura Agut (Trombonette), my friend Gregg Wolokoff and my colleague Adam Woolf, Member of His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Caecilia-Concert and Oltremontano, Sackbut teacher at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

As you might have noticed, the title of my book has nothing to do with a conventional trombone method. I have been inspired by Olympic athletes who are representative of sporting excellence.

I often make a comparison between their training and ours, because their life is totally dedicated to their career results and achieving excellence. Their work, along with their strict self discipline spawns champions. Ah yes, rest assured that we are also top notch athletes even though our looks may often differ...

We spend a substantial amount of time with our trombone, during which we solicit an enormous amount from our facial physiology; this is why we must pay a lot of attention to the way we approach our work. You can't leave anything to chance and for sure, don't fall into the trap of a boring practice routine which will encourage a botched job on your part. Your first daily exercises are the most important. Be sure to not force your body, or overwork your muscles, otherwise you will regret it later on.

The character of this compilation is based on a number of principles and fundamentals, on which we are going to work together. But, it's up to you to play, the ball is in your court!

Coach's Recommendations:

The first piece of advice I give you is **"Take you time to perform a thorough warm-up session"**.

I have noticed that there seem to be three different views on how to perform "warm-ups":

- 1) There are certain players who don't really care and immediately assault their embouchure with very difficult exercises, which as you might imagine, augments the risk of damaging their embouchure. Generally in this situation, it's "goodbye" to flexibility and precise intonation.
- 2) Then there are "The Snails", obsessed with their start-up. Sometimes they will take more than an hour before making a sound which is louder than pianissimo. Their next step is to test their general ability, then the mouthpiece buzz, then their prescribed embouchure exercises, and finally, see how high they can possibly play... All of this might seem quite reasonable, but this very slow way of performing a warm-up may have some negative side effects; the most important being that their body becomes accustomed to long, slow 'warm-ups' which usually means they have to be at the rehearsal/concert venue 2 hours before the rest of the group so as to be ready to perform. If for one reason or another the time is not available, this may well lead to an impending catastrophe.
- 3) Finally, we have those who apply some common sense to the way in which they organize their 'warm-up' sessions, preparing them to play well in much less time. Physiologically, top notch athletes and doctors specialising in sports medicine confirm that only 15 to 20 minutes of 'warm-up' exercises is all that is required for the loosening up of our muscles. I have tested this theory with a number of my trombone students and I can assure that the same applies to us. So, all that is left is to find exercises which will fit whoever is interested. This is the primary objective of this comprehensive volume.

Daniel LASSALLE

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Welcome to the Trials

I. Muscle Flexibility

I have created here 4 series of exercises which will enable you to begin your day under the best conditions.

You have at your disposal 2 groups (A and B), which are based on stretching using certain non-conventional exercises. These are really effective once you understand how to practice them correctly (perform them softly).

In the event that you choose to not stick with this style of exercises, then there are 2 other groups, more conventional ones (C and D), which may help you to start your session in a fashion with which you may be more comfortable.

If you choose so, you can also mix the exercises of all the groups A, B, C, & D. They are all relatively numbered according to the level of difficulty and intensity.

II. Daily Routine

Muscles begin to warm up with direct correlation to stretching exercises. This is the moment when athletes start trotting about. This is when they slowly turn on the gas, gradually exerting more energy in readiness for their start-up. Then it's "ready to go!".

Ideally, you should plan on 15 to 20 minutes of warm-ups prior to being ready to exert your playing energy. This is in accordance with all track stars and marathon runner's recommendations, which applies to us as well. I can assure you that this is the case! I have put it to the test with not only my students, but with my professional associates as well, including a few others who are still my friends...

Within the groups A, B, C, D from Muscle Flexibility & Daily Routine, you may choose to perform different exercises every day to avoid getting bored. Feel free to mix them up and create your own groups.

III. The Official Language - Mother Tongue

At the Olympic Games, the official language is normally French, except when the British are involved... So just leave them squabbling while I take on the responsibility for your "tongue".

Once we've completed our Muscle Flexibility & Daily Routine exercises, now it's of the utmost importance to practice 'tonguing', which is the application of articulation for about 5 minutes. Finally we're ready for a serious and intense practice session.

IV. The Vocalises

Everyone, in every country in the world strongly feels the emotion produced by their own national anthem. I hope to move you as well with this series of wonderful vocalises which will be, in a way, our own 'Ode to Joy'.

Let's start our exercises by singing them first, not with lyrics but simply with your trombone articulations. If you sing or vocalise your music before playing it, you'll be a winner. Your instrument is simply an extension of your voice.

V. The Pause - Long Tones

If you really think you're going to take a rest here, then think again because it's not "time-out", but simply improving and mastering your sense of pitch and developing the melodic sound of the trombone. Along with correct breathing technique, while at the same time tightening and loosening the muscles surrounding your mouth, you will improve your ability to correctly attack notes of varying pitch.

In order to successfully perform attacks, either on long tones or on the beginning of a phrase, it is very important to integrate your breathing as part of the phrase. Depending on the rhythmic value that you have to play, your breathing should be timed to allow an efficient air intake while enabling you to start the phrase on time. For this purpose, you can train with very long tones:

12 beats, 8 beats, 4beats, breathing on a 1 beat (60 crochet beat) basis.

Then - on semibreves and crochets, breathing in half a beat; - on quavers and semi quavers, breathing in quarter a beat. Thus, a controlled breathing technique brings you success.

VI. Tough Slugging

There's nothing stated in this chapter indicating that it's going to be a lot of fun. Someone invented "Ready to Wear" and then I come along with the trombonist's "Taylor Fit", called "Ready to Suffer"!

Ok, while your endurance is in for a tough test, eventually with some perseverance you'll become a champion of articulation. Believe me, regular practice along with a strong commitment and attitude, will permit you to discover feelings of accomplishment that you've never experienced before.

VII. Bionic Arm

Ok. It's time for an arm-wrestling match against your trombone! At the beginning, it'll be a tough fight, but after this series of exercises I can guarantee success.

VIII. A Hell of an Arm

A subtle mixture of Tough Slugging and Bionic Arm.

Now that you've practised time and time again like a madman, here's where you get to reveal your talent, showing off with a remarkable "Gold Medal" tongue/arm synchronized performance.

IX. Marathrombone

Now that you're on the track with this awesome training, you'll sense another world is opening up. The 'Marathrombone' helps with your overall performance: improved endurance, improved flexibility, improved sound and more accurate slide positions. It's the ultimate, all-over workout.

X. Those who are Pressed for Time

There are those of us who are always in a hurry with their warm-ups, similar to eating habits, and haven't learned how to take the time to appreciate what is before them.

For those who choose to sidetrack 'The Beautiful Things in Life', I have created some 'Fast food Menus' outlined in 'Minutes' rather than the price!

How to Organize a 'Warm-up' Session

Part 1) 15 to 20 minutes : Muscle Flexibility + Daily Routine

Part 2) 5 to 10 minutes: The Official Language (Awakening the tongue)

Part 3) 5 to 10 minutes: More Flexibility Practice

The Golden Rule: You should always alternate any strained exercises along with flexibility practice while limbering up your muscles. It's at this moment during your warm-up that I'd recommend using and alternating between two methods which I like a lot:

- « La mise en lèvre des trombonistes » by Guy Destanque, BIM Editions

- « Souplesses » by Yves Demarles, Leduc Editions

Part 4) 15 to 20 minutes: The Vocalises (The Art of singing)

Part 5) 10 to 15 minutes: Tough Slugging (more articulations studies)

Part 6) 10 to 15 minutes: Bionic Arm (arm coordination studies)

Part 7) 10 to 15 minutes: A Hell of an Arm (a mixture of the two preceding chapters)

Part 8) 15 minutes: Marathrombone

Concerning the Long Tones exercises, you can always do these in place of The Official Language of after The Vocalises, if you should be so inclined.

Regarding the group of exercises Tough Slugging / Bionic Arm / A Hell of an Arm, you can always add some flexibility practice. For that, I propose three other methods:

- Irons (Twenty-seven groups of exercises), Southern Music Company Editions

- Clarke Gordon (Tongue level exercises for trombone), Carl Fischer Editions

- Charles Colin (Advanced lip flexibilities), Charles Colin Music Editions

You might try exercise n°7 in Irons' method. An accomplished trombonist should at least be able to play this bastion of notes at a tempo of 80, a good one at 100, a very good one at 120, an excellent one at 136 and an unbelievable one at 160 and above...

Colin's first book is based on flexibility, long tones along with high pitched note studies.

The Gordon's method and Colin's second book are both based on flexibility variations.

You have maybe noticed that I haven't included a specific chapter devoted to intervals. The reason being is that with my method, I prefer that you practice using linear or constant frequency tones to improve your speed, sound and duration. If you are interested, I can also suggest a list of other associated methods which may be to your liking as well:

- Robert Muller : vol. 1 and vol. 2, Zimmermann Editions

- Jean-Baptiste Arban : Famous method for trombone, Carl Fischer Editions

- Ernst Gaetke : 32 Daily Lip and Tongue Exercises for Trombone, Zimmermann Editions

- Anton Slama : 66 studies in all major and minor keys for trombone, Carl Fischer Editions

- Gabriel Masson : 12 Etudes Variées, Leduc Editions

Ideally, your daily warm-up session should last about one hour and a half, and use a combination of all the exercises

In the event that you are unable to devote this length of time or you are simply not motivated to do so, then at least try to accomplish a minimum amount, staying within my recommended format.

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I. Muscle Flexibility

There are some exercises that I would like to introduce you to, because they are very efficient, they don't ask a lot of effort, but still aren't popular enough : stretches, or in this case, lip-slurs. I offer you ten series of them.

Those exercises are beneficial at the beginning (warm up) and at the end of the day (recovery).

I classified them into two groups: Group A (No. 1 to 5), quite simple and Group B (No. 6 to 10), with a higher degree of difficulty.

They should be played without the trigger and in a tempo going from 60 to 80 crotchet beats per minute (bpm).

If, at the beginning, you can't quite do all of the intervals, try to get as close as possible, but above all don't cheat : continue to keep your lip muscles tight and don't let them relax.

Group A - Stretching (relaxed)

from 7th position to 1st position

1A 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

1B 1. 1. 4. 1. 1. 2. 2. 5. 2. 2. 3. 3. 6. 3. 3. from 7th position to 1st position

4. 4. 7. 4. 4. 5. 5. 1. 5. 5. 6. 6. 2. 6. 6. 7. 7. 3. 7. 7.

1C 1. 1. 4. 1. 4. 1. 1. 2. 2. 5. 2. 5. 2. 2. 3. 3. 6. 3. 6. 3. 3. idem

4. 4. 7. 4. 7. 4. 4. 5. 5. 1. 5. 1. 5. 5. 6. 6. 2. 6. 2. 6. 6. 7. 7. 3. 7. 3. 7. 7.

1ABC 1. 1. 4. 1. 1. 1. 1. 4. 1. 4. 1. 1. 2. 2. 5. 2. 2. 2. 2. 5. 2. 5. 2. 2. 3. 3. 3. 6. 3. 3. 3. 3. 6. 3. 6. 3. 3.

4. 4. 7. 4. 4. 4. 4. 7. 4. 7. 4. 4. 5. 5. 5. 1. 5. 5. 5. 5. 1. 5. 1. 5. 5.

6. 6. 2. 6. 6. 6. 6. 2. 6. 2. 6. 6. 7. 7. 3. 7. 7. 7. 7. 3. 7. 3. 7. 7. idem

II. Daily Routine

These exercises are more intense and varied, they'll help you to be prepared for the worst...
You can start at a comfortable tempo for all of them but should increase the speed later on.

The slide positions are given for 1A and should be the same on 1B, C, D, E and Grand Slam.

1A

7. 6. 5. 4.

3. 2. 1.

1B

1C

1D

1E

III. The Officiel Language "Awakening the tongue"

A very important step between warm-up and hell!

Awakening the tongue is a key moment in your warm-up that shouldn't be forgotten.

It will help you to precisely centre the notes and thereby perform the following exercises in a serene way.

It should take between 5 and 10 minutes.

1

The musical score consists of 11 staves of music in bass clef. The first staff is marked with a '1'. The music is written in a 4/4 time signature. The first four measures of each staff are quarter notes, and the remaining measures are eighth notes. Triplet markings (the number '3') are placed above groups of three notes in the latter half of each staff. The key signature changes from C major to D major (one sharp) in the third staff, then to B-flat major (two flats) in the fifth staff, and back to D major in the seventh staff. A large red watermark 'For Preview Only' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page, overlapping several staves.

IV. The Vocalises

"The Art of singing"

The fundamental role of the sackbut (the modern trombone's ancestor) was to imitate the human voice.
This is a tradition from which the modern trombone player can benefit.

Vocalising is interesting in every points of view: practice and control of blowing, obtaining different sorts of legato (direct slurring, articulated, opposite movement), tuning, sound and endurance.

One of my basic principles is to practise from low to high register, trying to keep the same projection and richness in sound over the whole range.

1

The musical score consists of six staves of music, each starting with a bass clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff is marked with a '1'. The music is written in a style that mimics vocal phrasing, with slurs and breath marks. The key signature changes to two sharps (F#, C#) for the second and third staves, and to two flats (Bb, Eb) for the fourth, fifth, and sixth staves. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, often grouped with slurs to indicate legato phrasing. A large red watermark 'FOR Preview Only' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

V. The Pause - Long Tones

Do you know the story of the Man with the Iron Mask ? Well, here is the one of the Forged Iron Mask: an embouchure, forged by rock solid patience. I offer you two styles of exercises, to be played at 60 crochet bpm. The first one is going from the low to high register, in the manner of the weight lifters who develop their muscles by repeating the movements from the bottom up. The second one, built on intervals, will enable you to control the alternation between a high and a low phrase.

Advice of the Sage: don't over practise those exercises as they are physically very hard. Respect the timing of the rests between the notes, and don't do all the exercises in a row but either by key or depending on your upcoming deadlines (concert, audition, exam...).

1st series

The musical score consists of 14 staves of music, each representing an exercise. The exercises are arranged in pairs of ascending and descending lines across various keys: D major, C major, Bb major, Ab major, G major, F major, E major, D major, C major, Bb major, Ab major, G major, F major, and E major. Each exercise consists of a series of notes with rests, designed for long tones.

VI. Tough Slugging

The development of a good tonguing and articulation technique is something that requires a lot of patience.

In order to really improve your performances in this field, hard work is the only way.

How many players give up as soon as the first pains appear?

Advice of the Sage:

Firstly, take a metronome and test your speed on a simple staccato.

For example, try to detach the notes in semi quavers in 60 crochet beat, then increase the speed until the staccato technique isn't controlled anymore.

Everyone has a 'stage' between simple, single-tongued staccato and double-tongued staccato where they lose control of effective articulation. From there, you'll have to start practising a little bit below your tempo limit, increasing it depending on your evolution, and never getting past double tonguing.

Welcoming Cocktail...

The musical score for 'Welcoming Cocktail...' is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music is a continuous sequence of eighth notes, many of which are beamed together in groups of four. The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F# and C#) and then to one flat (Bb). The notes are primarily eighth notes and quarter notes, with some sixteenth notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

VII. Bionic Arm

A large number of trombone players pay too little attention to their slide technique: fatal mistake! This practice is primordial because you actually have to synchronise your arm, tongue and brain if you have one...

Your arm movement should follow the natural movement of the body, staying truly aligned and not pushing to the left/inside.

Advice of the Sage: Between just one or two positions, try to use your wrist as much as possible, between three and four add your forearm, and beyond that, slightly tense up your wrist and forearm, and use your whole arm. Paradoxically, in order to have a bionic arm, you'll have to be very supple. The following exercises will help you organise everything, depending on your will and motivations, to finally get the bionic arm that your instrument requires.

Test

The exercises are as follows:

- Staff 1: Bass clef, one sharp (F#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 2: Bass clef, one sharp (F#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 3: Bass clef, one sharp (F#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 4: Bass clef, one sharp (F#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 5: Bass clef, two sharps (F#, C#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 6: Bass clef, two sharps (F#, C#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 7: Bass clef, two sharps (F#, C#), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 8: Bass clef, one flat (F), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 9: Bass clef, one flat (F), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 10: Bass clef, one flat (F), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 11: Bass clef, two flats (Bb, Eb), eighth notes, 4/4 time.
- Staff 12: Bass clef, two flats (Bb, Eb), eighth notes, 4/4 time.

VIII. A Hell of an Arm

Still ok? Then let's go on...

Test

The musical score is written in bass clef and consists of 11 staves. The key signature starts with one sharp (F#) and one natural (B), indicating G major. It changes to two flats (Bb, Eb) for B-flat major, then to two sharps (F#, C#) for B major, and finally to one flat (Bb) for B-flat major. The rhythm is primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups of four or six. Slurs are used extensively to indicate phrasing. A large red watermark reading 'For Preview Only' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.

IX. Marathrombone

The Home Straight!... just a few more 'little' things to do...
Meanwhile, you can suffer in silence, and refrain yourself from any disagreeable comment regarding me.

Advice from the Coach : Exercise 1 is shown here on the Bflat-F harmonics,
but you can also practise it on the higher harmonics: F-Bflat and Bflat-D.

1

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X. Those who are Pressed for Time

10' Menu

Starters: 2 choices

- Muscle Flexibility: Group A - No. 1 (p. 8)
or
- Muscle Flexibility: Group C - No. 11 (p. 21)

Main Dishes: 2 choices

- Daily Routine: No. 1 (p. 34)
or
- Daily Active: No. 4 (p. 39)

Desserts: 2 choices

- The Vocalises: No. 6 (p. 83) & No. 7 (p. 84) on the 7 positions
or
- 5 minutes of Marathrombone (p. 188)

15' Menu

Starters: 4 choices

- Muscle Flexibility: Group A - No. 2 (p. 9)
or
- Muscle Flexibility: Group C - No. 12 (p. 25)
or
- Muscle Flexibility: Group C - No. 15 (p. 28)

Main Dishes: 3 choices

- Daily Routine: No. 2 (p. 36)
or
- Daily Routine: No. 7 (p. 44)
or
- Daily Routine: No. 10 (p. 49)

Cheeses: 2 choices

- The Official Language: No. 1 (p. 50)
or
- The Official Language: No. 2 (p. 52)

Desserts: 3 choices

- The Vocalises: No. 3 (p. 78) & No. 4 (p. 80) on the 7 positions
or
- Tough Slugging: Welcoming Cocktail (p. 114)
or
- Bionic Arm: Test (p. 123)