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The most fundamental aspect of playing any wind instrument is breathing. The air required to produce sound must be inhaled and exhaled efficiently with the least possible distraction to the musical product. On tuba and euphonium, volume of breath is especially important due to the high flow rate of our instruments.

An important influence on this author's concept of breathing has been readings in the area of Zen. A great emphasis is placed in the control and use of breath in achieving higher states of consciousness. A key point involves relaxation of both mind and body. This relaxation

helps to reduce outside distractions. The goal in this use of breath control is to effectively quiet the mind.

Many aspects of breathing as used in Zen meditation can be helpful to the wind instrument performer. In teaching proper breathing, time is spent on careful measuring of inhalation and exhalation to help gain control of the respiratory process. The end result is an almost unconscious, steady breathing cycle with minimal use of energy.

For the instrumentalist, a relaxed control of the breath and mind frees him to concentrate on the musical ends. As a first step toward this end, I recommend use of the 5-3-1 breathing exercise. It works as follows:

1. Establish a steady, rather slow beat, about mm60. To begin, empty the lungs of air.
2. In 5 even counts, breath in completely. Concentrate on a constant, steady inhalation that is not complete until the end of the 5th count.
3. After 5 counts, exhale in the same steady, relaxed fashion. Again, do not complete the exhalation until the end of the 5th count. Repeat for a total of 3 repetitions.
4. Without pause, continue the breathing cycle with a 3-beat inhalation and exhalation - still relaxed and even. 3 repetitions.
5. Finally, proceed to a 1 count inhalation and exhalation for 3 repetitions.

During this exercise, sit comfortably erect. The back should be straight, but not rigid. The shoulders should hang comfortably. At the end of the exercise, there may be slight dizziness from the unusual amount of breathing. At this point, the breathing apparatus should be relaxed and breath should continue with great ease. This exercise is especially good during the warm-up and just before performances to relax and prepare both mind and body for playing.

Now that we have established the sensation of a relaxed, full breath, we must transfer this to a form usable while playing. Use of the syllable "whoe" is especially helpful. Practice pronouncing this in two parts. First "wh"; blow air while saying this. Then a simple "oe" with a good, round sound. Now say the entire "whoe," preserving the blowing of air and the round ending.

After several normal "exhalation pronunciations," say the same word while inhaling. I like this word for breathing because it can actually be said while inhaling. Also, the lips begin and end in an embouchure-like position which is important while playing. The "whoe" is helpful for students because it is easy to

remember - also, if they remember to think the word for each breath while playing, they invariably get a full breath.

One self-check to see if the "whoie" breath is being executed properly is to take the breath and then attempt several "sniff-breaths" through the nose. If done properly, one or no sniff breaths will be possible.

Another important part of proper breathing is to keep it simple. Do not get greatly involved in the physical motions of breathing. Concentrate on the end result-a full breath.

Too often, work on breathing stops at this point. Unfortunately, the most important aspect of breathing comes next-the exhalation. The air should be released in an easy, effortless way in order to produce the fullest, most resonant tone.

To establish this easy in-out motion, practice unmetred long tones. Take a few full breaths and simply let the air flow out of the lungs. Now, with the horn, take a full, whoie-breath and play a warm, even tone. On CC tuba, start on low C; on BB-flat tuba low B-flat; etc. Play at a comfortable, unstrained volume-mp to mf. Keep the pitch and tone even. When the air runs low, stop the tone in the same way that the breath ends when sighing. The end of each note should be as even and relaxed as the rest of the note. Do not force in order to completely empty the lungs, as this causes unwanted tension to develop. Breath attacks are highly recommended in this exercise. The pattern should be as follows:

Low C..... Low C..... etc.

Low B.....

Low B-flat.....

The goal of this work is to help make production of tone a very natural occurrence. Playing an instrument must become as natural as singing.

About the Author: Jeff Funderburk is currently Custom Music Company's Artist-in-Residence. He is an active freelance musician in the Detroit area, teaches at Macomb Community College, and presents numerous tuba clinics and recitals around the world. Mr. Funderburk holds degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi and from the University of Illinois. He was the winner of the 1983 T.U.B.A. Senior International Solo Competition.