Daily Maintenance

Matthew Gee

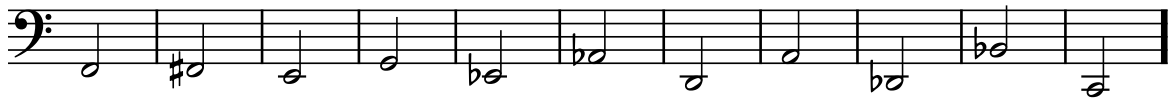
I devised these exercises to address a multitude of challenges I was experiencing working professionally in London. Their main goal is to develop **consistency** and **flexibility** by deconstructing trombone playing into its **basic fundamentals**: airflow, vibration and breath control. I try to perform these exercises every day, although exactly when this occurs is not important. That said, I find everything up to **Basic Slurs Part 2** offers a wonderful antidote to tired chops, be this from a big blow the night before or a tough practice schedule.

Airflow Vibration	For me, the two most imprtant aspects of trombone playing. If these are working well I do not worry about what musical challenges lie ahead.

The dynamics marked are merely suggestions. What is more important is to let the focus of the exercise lead the dynamic – for example, working on **airflow** may encourage a more comfortable volume. When trying to resurrect tired chops I find it useful to keep all the dynamics very low, as this helps me to focus purely on **vibration**.

One of the most important aspects of this routine is to only think about one **basic fundamental** at a time. It is near impossible to think about (and therefore constructively practice) more than one thing at once, so I would suggest choosing **one** fundamental to practice per exercise and only move on once you are happy that it is working well. It is highly likely that when you start thinking about the next fundamental, the previous fundamental will dip in quality and you may have to return to it later.

The **Flexibility Pattern** ensures that we explore much more of the instrument's valve register. There are many benefits to this: the lower harmonics on the valve force you to engage with your breathing more actively; you are much more likely to complete the entire flexibility when compared to traditionally descending flexibilities from first position; it is highly beneficial to work on your sound in this register of the instrument; by starting the flexibility in the middle and working outwards your embouchure is less likely to get 'stuck' in a register, aiding **flexibility**.



The final note is regarding **efficiency**. Everything we work on in the stress-free environment of the practice room should be as efficient as possible – remove pressure from the mouthpiece and breathe freely without creating tension. Make efficiency one of your practice goals. The challenge is then to transfer this free, easy, efficient playing onto the stage and into your performances.

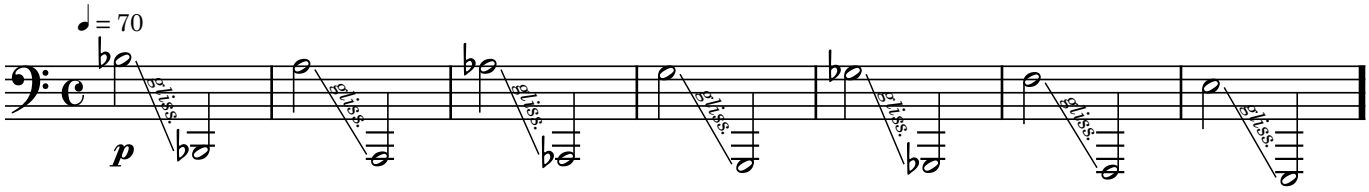
I hope you find these exercises as useful as I do, and that they help you achieve your playing goals.

MGMusic 2019

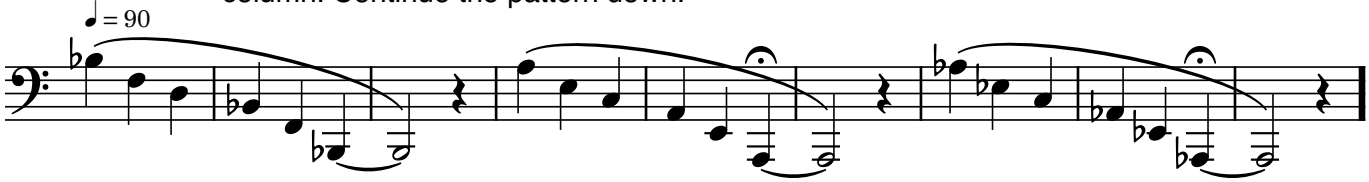
Daily Maintenance

Matthew Gee

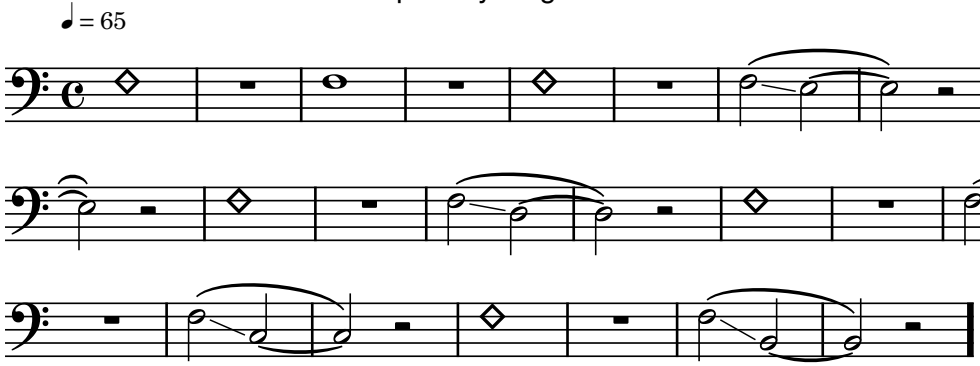
Buzzing Repeat until lips are as relaxed as possible. It may be necessary to remove the bottom lip.



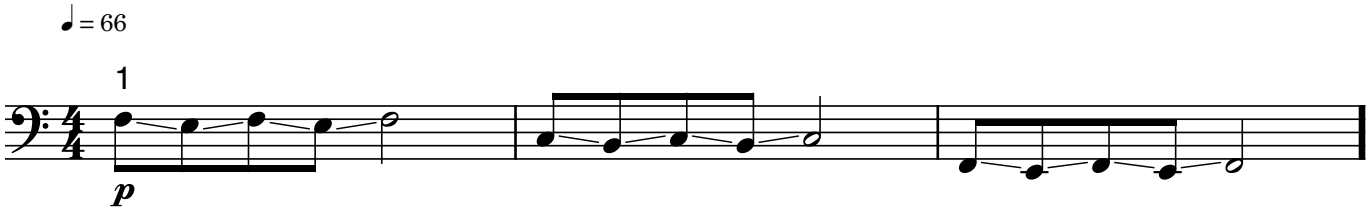
Quiet Buzzing Shift the focus to the vibration of the lips. Move as much of this vibration onto the air column. Continue the pattern down.



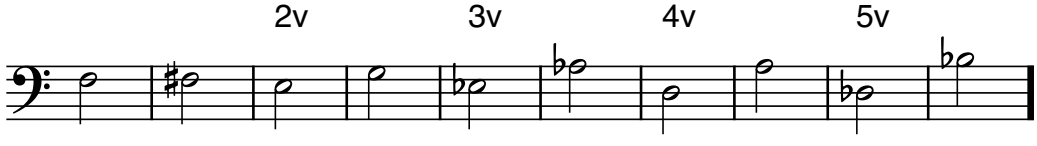
Sound and Efficiency Blow air through the instrument without making a sound (square notehead). Imagine a beautiful sound and then recreate that sound (normal notehead). Keep everything relaxed and efficient.



Gliss and Lip Bend Start with the positions specified, then follow the **Flexibility Pattern** below. Lip bend to the first E-natural, slide gliss to the second E-natural.



Flexibility Pattern

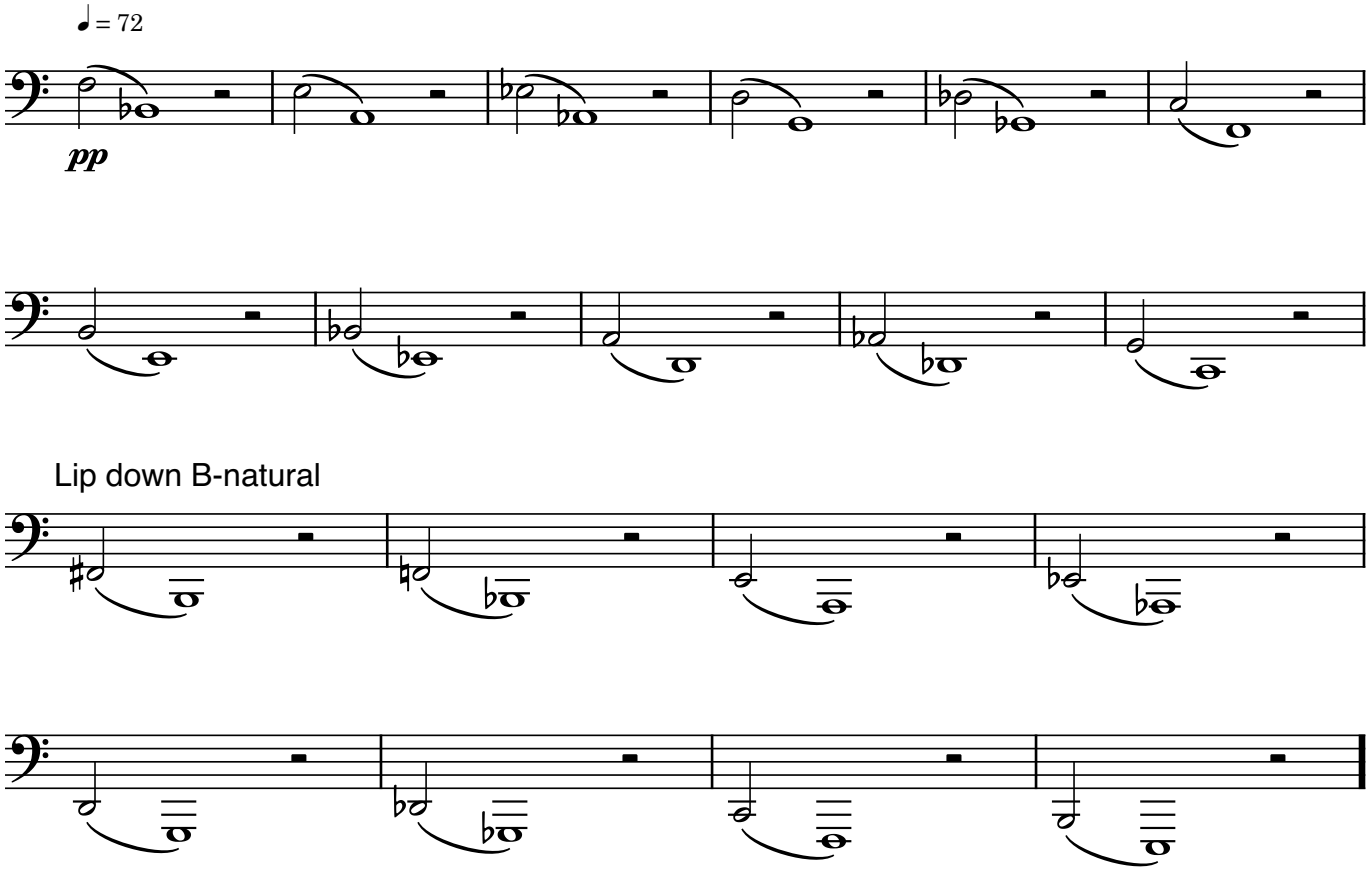


MGMusic 2019

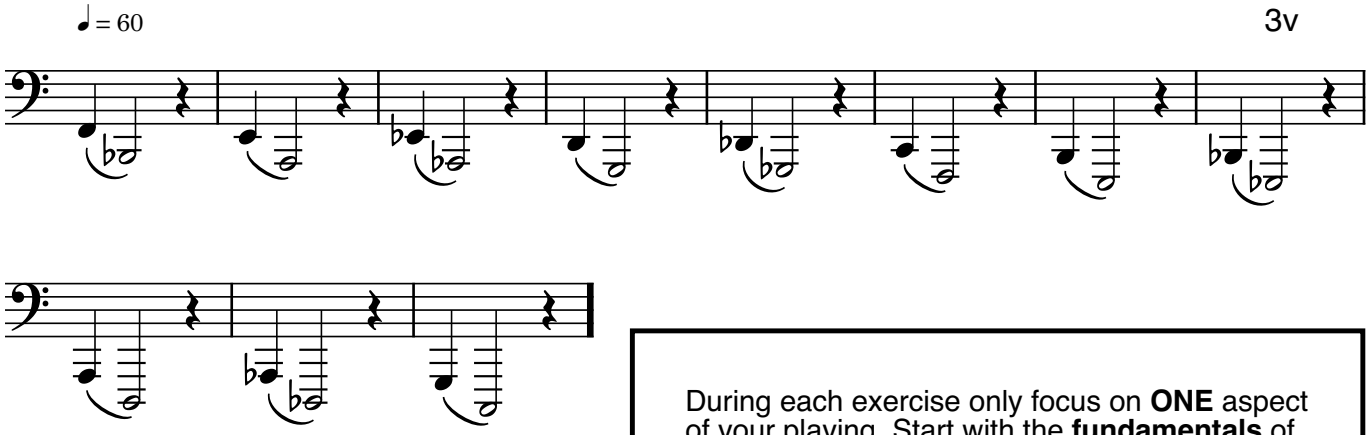
Daily Maintenance

Matthew Gee

Basic Slurs - Part 1



Basic Slurs- Part 2



During each exercise only focus on **ONE** aspect of your playing. Start with the **fundamentals** of brass playing: airflow, vibration, and breathing. Only continue to the next fundamental once you are happy with the current one.

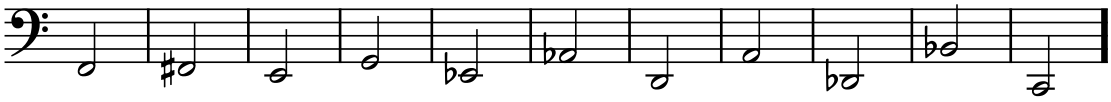
MGMusic 2019

Daily Maintenance

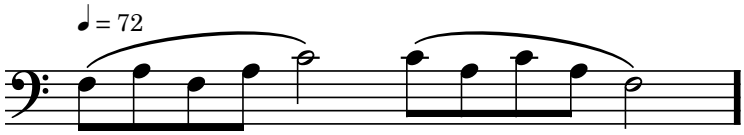
Matthew Gee

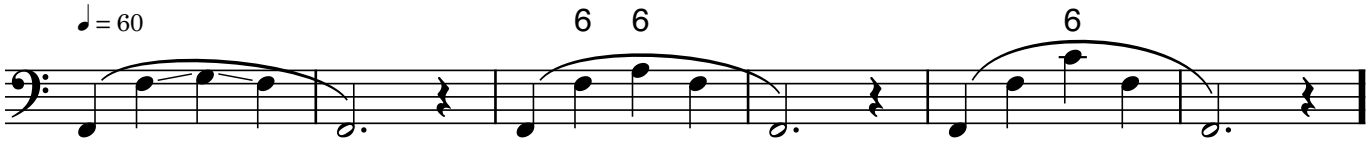
All exercises should follow the **Flexibility Pattern** unless otherwise stated.

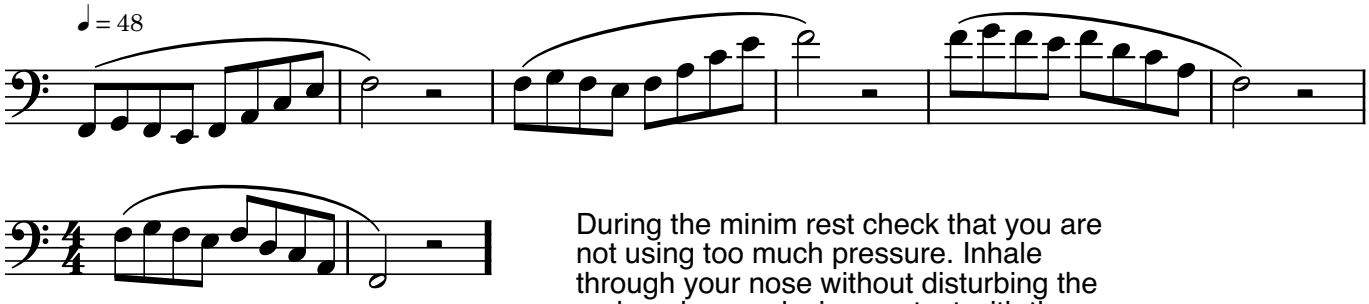
Flexibility Pattern 7



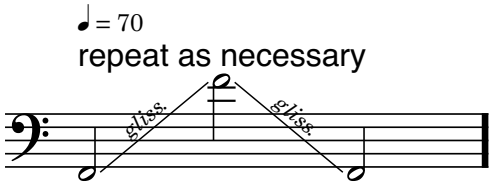
Flexibilities - All start in 6th position and follow the Flexibility Pattern.







During the minim rest check that you are not using too much pressure. Inhale through your nose without disturbing the embouchure or losing contact with the mouthpiece.

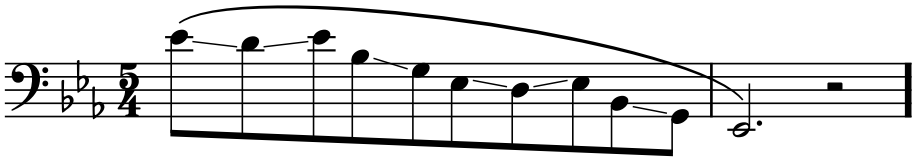


Aim to hit all of the harmonics between the outer notes.

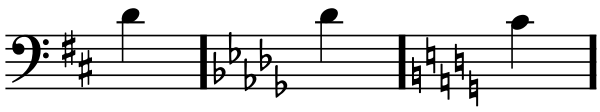
MGMusic 2019

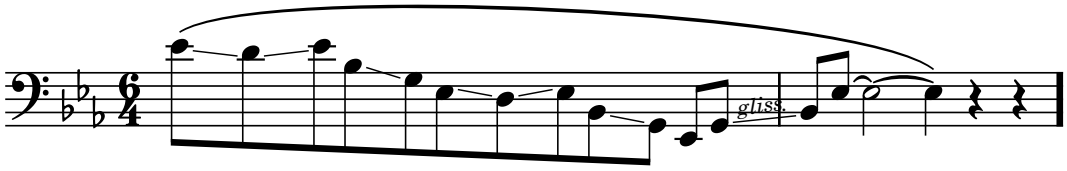
Daily Maintenance

Matthew Gee

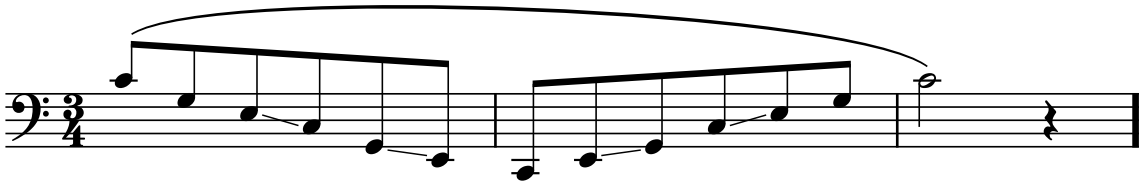


Repeat the exercise through the keys to the right. Use a **smooth airflow**, ensuring seamless connections between the notes - slide technique is not important here. Keep working on the **fundamentals** stated in the Basic Slurs exercise. Do not move onto the next key until you are happy with the current one.

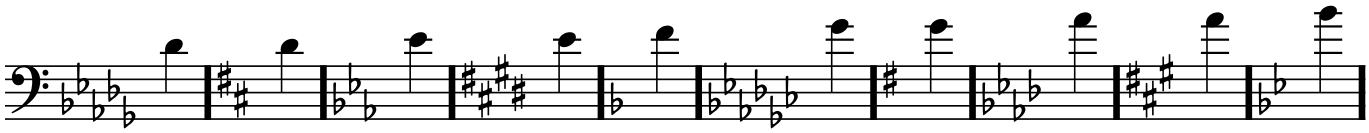




Expand the exercise ensuring that the changes are smooth with no 'notching'. Make your playing as **efficient** as possible. Complete the arpeggio, but start with C major:



Ascending through the keys below to develop **facility** and f**lexibility**. Check the embouchure is starting and ending the exercise in exactly the same position.

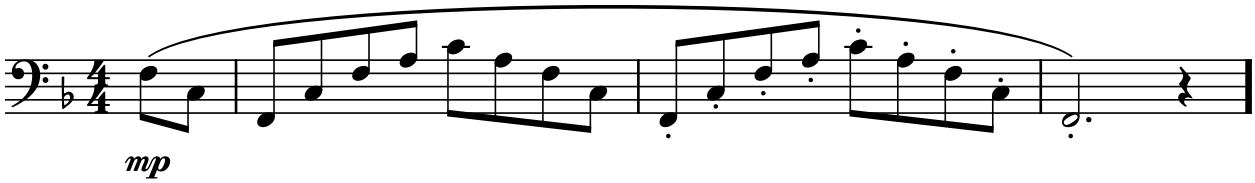


MGMusic 2019

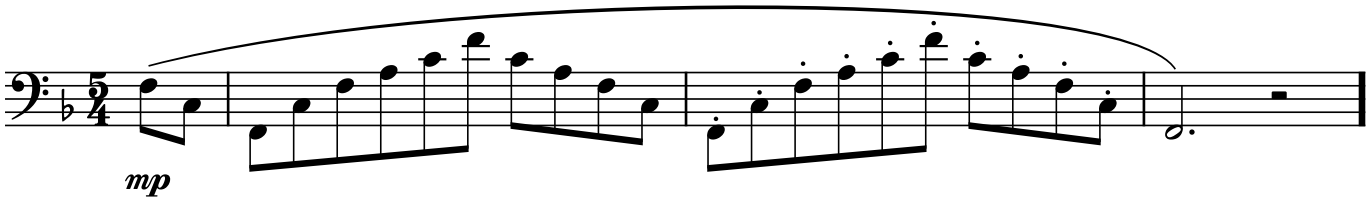
Daily Maintenance

Matthew Gee

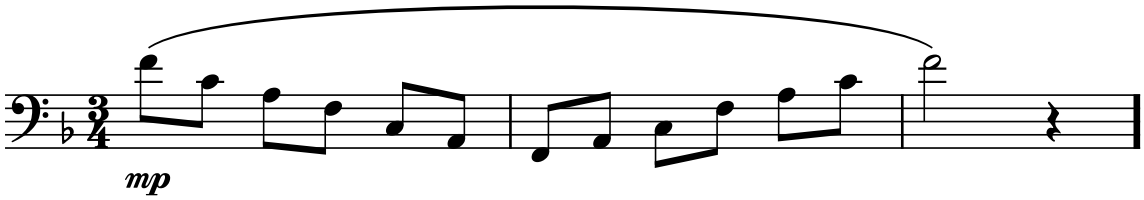
As with the previous exersise, keep the air moving. When marked staccato, allow the tongue to strike through the air column. Start in 6th position and follow the **Flexibility Pattern**.



Then expand upwards.



Take a breath which relates to the passage you are about to play: the following high passage requires a high breath.



MGMusic 2019