

Keys to making a good sound

1. Use good air

- Put your lips in the shape as if you are saying the letter “w”, then blow air through that shape
- Don’t worry about the buzz sound at first, get a nice stream of air going through, like you are blowing a steady stream of air through an imaginary straw
- Keeping the lips the same shape, practice blowing gentle slow air, and fast intense air
- When blowing faster air, support it from your tummy so that it doesn’t slow down as you run out

2. Breathe deeply and efficiently

- Open the corners of your mouth like you are smiling and breathe around your mouthpiece this way
- If your mouth and throat are open your lungs should fill quickly
- Breathe right down into the bottom of your tummy – you should feel yourself expand like a balloon

3. Play the phrases (continuous sound)

- When you play more than one note, keep your air going, and separate the notes with the tongue
- To practise this, blow air, and say ‘hooooo-tooooo-tooooo’
- Try to avoid moving the jaw when you use your tongue

4. Sit up straight

- Sit forward in your chair, with your back away from the backrest
- Keep your feet flat on the floor for good balance
- Bring the instrument to your face, not your face to the instrument

How to practice

1. Do a warmup

- Read “keys to making a good sound”
- Take a few deep breaths, blow some air through the mouthpiece and the instrument
- Play long notes with your best sound on all the notes you know

2. Practice your techniques

- Try some of the techniques you have worked on in lessons, concentrating on doing them really well

3. Practice your pieces

- Pick a piece you want to master, then work on short sections of it (ie. 2 bars at a time)
- Once you can play each section, start putting them together until you can play the whole song consistently
- Finally, play through some other songs that you like playing