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TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TRUMPET PRACTICE

BY RAQUEL SAMAYOA

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TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TRUMPET PRACTICE

BY RAQUEL SAMAYOA

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Finding helpful apps and tools to assist with trumpet practice can be beneficial to the busy trumpeter. There is a wealth of resources out there, but maneuvering through the mire of apps, tools, software, etc. can sometimes be a difficult and daunting task. This article will identify some tools that can offer a helpful hand to brass players of any level.

Time management is a crucial element for success in any career. A trumpet player must find time to hone their craft while staying balanced with the fundamental and musical aspects of trumpet playing. Finding balance will also include involving other aspects of one's life, including work, family, and fun! Using a Google Calendar is helpful for a variety of reasons. One can keep track of events on all devices, including a laptop/computer, iPad, smartphone, Apple Watch, and other Wi-Fi-enabled devices. One can also receive reminders and notifications so nothing is ever forgotten and can perhaps serve as a source of motivation to practice. Events can also be color-coded to help highlight important events. Lastly, one can share this information with others, including students, which can assist with one's teaching schedule or for scheduling meetings with a colleague. If trumpet is not a person's primary occupation, is it easy to filter out the different Google calendars. Simply put, this enables one to view only the calendars that are needed. This is helpful to separate gigs and other trumpet-related events from the usual and often mundane events and obligations at work.

The "Grid of Truth" is a helpful tool that can help keep a player accountable by keeping track of their progress in trumpet practice and is a truly impactful tool with its simplicity. It is a simple Excel or Google spreadsheet that can be customized to include what one needs to practice in a warm-up routine, daily practice session, or any music that one is preparing for a performance.

Month: February

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Long tones		x		x		x			x		x
Flexibility – slurs	x	x	x		x	x		x			
Single tongue	x		x	x	x				x	x	x
Double tongue		x		x		x		x		x	
Triple tongue			x		x		x		x		x
Scales	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		
Lyrical etude			x			x			x		
Technical etude	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			
Transposition		x				x			x		
Range				x						x	x
Colchester		x		x			x	x	x		
Tico Tico	x	x	x								
Virtuosity				x		x				x	x
Concerto de Aranjuez	x				x					x	

Sample Grid of Truth spreadsheet

Another helpful tool is a practice journal. The benefits to this include keeping track of one's chop health, assessing what was practiced and its frequency, gauging progress over time, and cross-referencing good and bad days. There are many apps that will enable you to keep your journal online, making it accessible anywhere at any time.

An iPad or other tablet device can be a game-changer for many reasons. On it, one can store an entire music library that can be accessed through iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, or other cloud storage solutions. Having music readily available is not only travel friendly, but can also promote one's motivation to practice. Having easy access to music can inspire the trumpet player to practice a wider variety of music, including solos, band parts, etudes, orchestral repertoire, and fundamentals books. Other helpful benefits of an iPad include being able to access a metronome and tuner app, practice jazz with the iReal Pro app, watch YouTube videos of great brass pedagogical material during practice breaks, take notes and have them all in one place, and use myriad other apps that can assist with teaching and keeping track of one's personal gains on the trumpet. One can also find relaxation and meditation apps on the iPad, which can calm the mind and promote a healthier mindset for playing the trumpet.



(L – R): Asper Trumpet Mouthpiece Visualizer, Brass Buzzer buzz-aid, Breath Builder

HELPFUL TOOLS

Time Management

Google Calendar
 Google Sheet—(The Grid of Truth)
 Practice journal—paper journals, online journals, <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210d>

Organization

iPad or other type of tablet
 Cloud storage: Dropbox, Google Drive, iCloud

Accessories

Asper Trumpet Mouthpiece Visualizer: <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210e>
 Brass Buzzer buzz-aid: <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210f>
 Breath Builder: <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210g>
 pBuzz: <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210h>
 Warburton P.E.T.E: <https://tinyurl.com/itg2210i>

Apps

Tonal Energy
 SuperMetronome
 Amazing Slow Downer
 forScore
 iRealPro

Podcasts

Brass Chats
 The Brass Junkies
 That's Not Spit, It's Condensation!
 Marching Roundtable

Music

YouTube—a great source for many masterclasses, live performances, and historical performances
 Spotify
 Apple Music

Meditation apps

Calm
 Headspace

There are a variety of physical tools to help the ambitious brass player, including the Brass Buzzer buzz-aid for conditioning the embouchure, the Breath Builder for external air exercises, the Asper Trumpet Mouthpiece Visualizer for additional embouchure development, and the Warburton Personal Embouchure Training Device (aka P.E.T.E.) for doing calisthenic exercises with the embouchure.

Some notable apps for the busy trumpeter include Tonal Energy with its wonderful metronome and tuner capabilities. This is a popular app that can help the trumpet player in a variety of ways. The only limitations are one's own creativity. If one wants more pizzazz in their metronome, the SuperMetronome really fits this niche with its variety of rhythms and sounds. The ability to customize different beats can really spice up one's long-tone or articulation practice.

The Seconds Pro app can help stave off injury to the chops by giving structure to one's practice and assisting with practice time management. It is fully customizable and can be used for many different types of practice sessions, including a morning routine. Another app that can be extremely useful is the Amazing Slow Downer. One is able to use any music on iTunes/Apple Music or personal library and slow it down or speed it up without affecting the intonation. One can also loop certain sections of a piece to help master a difficult lick through repetition.

In addition to the tactile types of learning one must do with trumpet, there are a plethora of apps that can assist with knowledge, motivation, and inspiration. These factors can be crucial in helping the struggling or mentally drained musician. Listening to podcasts, videos on YouTube, and inspiring music on Apple Music or Spotify can really assist with one's mental game. Everyone needs a little inspiration once in a while to

“Everyone needs a little inspiration once in a while to help get over bumps in the road that occur when practicing trumpet.”

help get over bumps in the road that occur when practicing trumpet, and this can be accomplished away from the trumpet on the drive to work, on the treadmill in the gym, or on the next nature walk.

The trumpet can be demanding on one's physical and mental well-being. It is a good idea to make a plan with different types of strategies to help stay in top form. Using helpful tools and apps like these can keep a person engaged in the practice session and provide some fun and opportunities for creativity. Happy practicing!

About the author: Raquel Samayoa is assistant professor of trumpet at the University of North Texas. As a member of the award-winning Seraph Brass, she frequently tours the us and abroad performing concerts and engaging in educational outreach performances. Raquel is the executive editor of the International Women's Brass Conference (IWBC) bi-annual newsletter, *Noteworthy*. Dr. Samayoa is a Yamaha performing artist and a Denis Wick artist and clinician.

