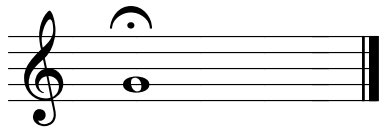


The following playing exercises are designed to build muscular control in your face and lower jaw, helping to establish the connection between the embouchure and tone production.

Before playing the first exercise, set your embouchure as described on the previous page and practice sustaining a low G. Work to produce a dark, rich, full tone while maintaining a steady embouchure. You may wish to practice in front of a mirror, watching your chin to make certain it remains flat and still. Keep your lower teeth pulled down.

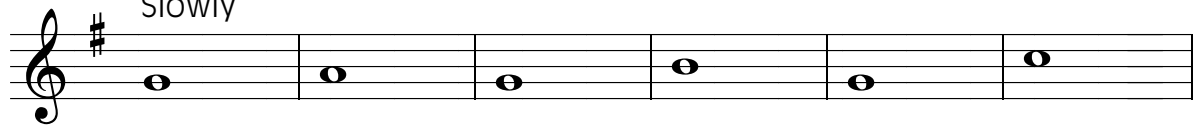
Listen for buzzing or ringing sounds in the upper frequencies of the tone. Work to eliminate these qualities by rounding out your oral chamber (the inside of your mouth). Keep the tongue low in your mouth and in your throat to further darken the tone.

Once you locate the best tone possible on the low G, practice Exercise #1. Concentrate on maintaining both the embouchure and tone quality. Again, try playing in front of a mirror so you can watch the chin. Remember to keep it flat and steady.



Practice this exercise at soft, medium, and loud volume levels.

Exercise #1

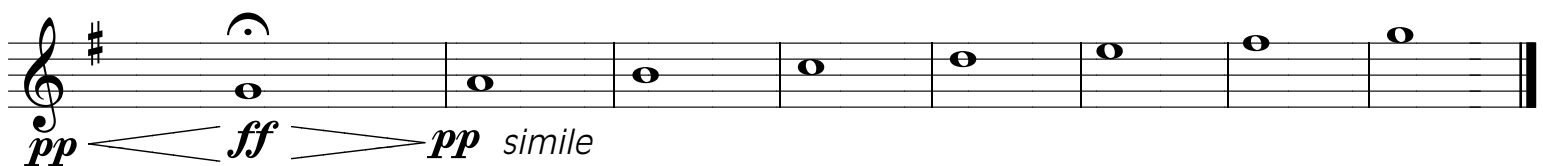


You may have difficulty maintaining both the embouchure and the tone when playing across the break (notes above middle C). Both the middle D and the upper G have tendencies to break either up or down. Focus on maintaining a firm embouchure with added support from the diaphragm (gut). Biting or pinching with the lower jaw often results in squeaks, while playing with inadequate support from the diaphragm or embouchure may result in the pitch breaking downward.

Our next exercise involves playing a G scale in whole notes while working to maintain a steady embouchure and an even, dark tone. Breathe deeply before starting each note as softly as possible. Begin your crescendo immediately, pushing the volume to a tasteful limit. Save enough air so you can provide adequate abdominal support for a decrescendo that fades out.

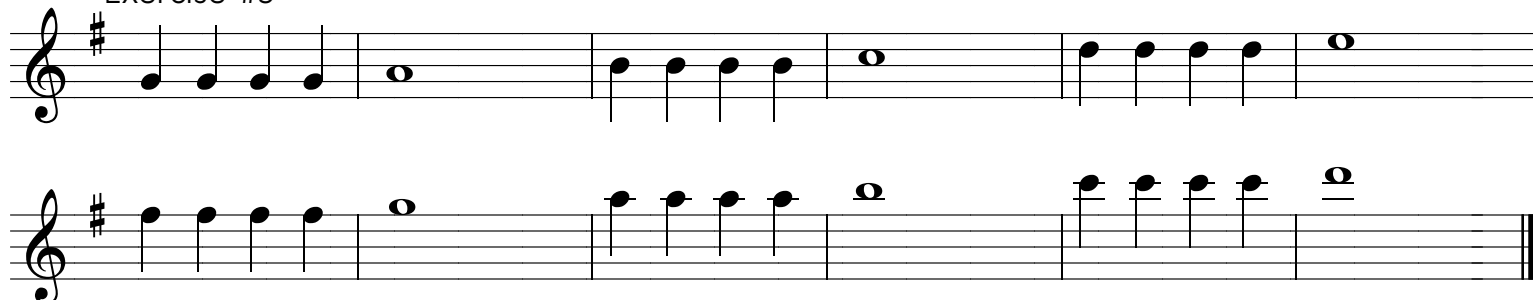
It's a good idea to use a tuner as you practice this exercise. The natural tendency is to loosen the embouchure during the crescendo, which causes the pitch to go flat. The use of a tuner can help you to focus your efforts on maintaining firmness in the corners of the mouth by alerting you to pitch changes.

Exercise #2



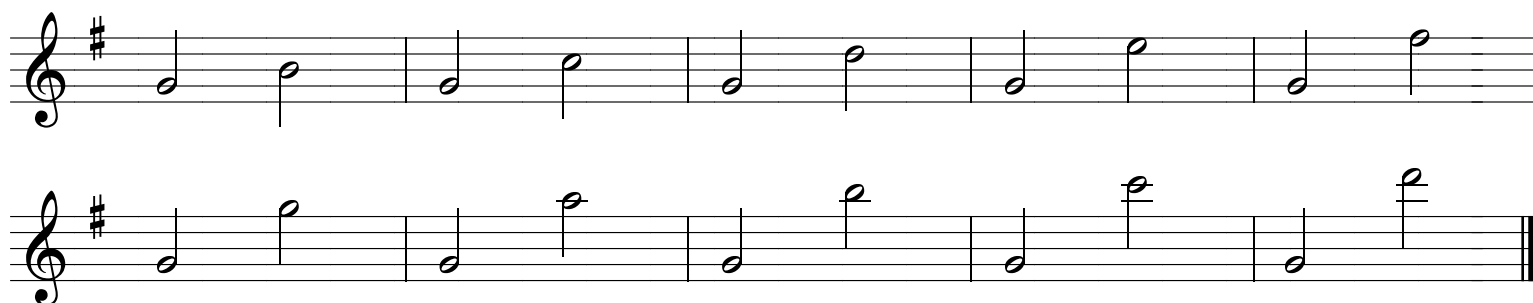
The challenges of articulating and playing in the upper register are addressed in exercises 3-5. You may wish to watch yourself in the mirror to make certain there is no jaw movement associated with the tongue. Watch also for movement in the throat or areas below the jaw. The objective with this exercise is to develop independence between your tongue and jaw muscles while maintaining your embouchure and abdominal support.

Exercise #3



Exercise #4

The exercise below should also be played in quarter notes.

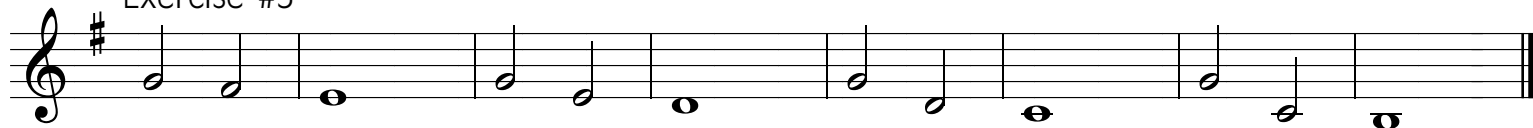


The low register may prove to be difficult to produce with consistency, especially on tenor sax. For this reason, it is best to be thoroughly warmed up before attempting the exercises below.

A popular misconception is that the jaw should be dropped and relaxed when playing in the low register. To the contrary, maintain a firm and focused embouchure. By keeping the teeth down, as in our previous exercises, the mattress created by the lower lip should allow the reed to vibrate in a manner that will produce the low tones. It is only necessary to drop the jaw if the lower teeth are creating too much upward pressure, thus inhibiting the reeds ability to vibrate.*

These exercises may be practiced with both a full-tone and sub-tone. Sub-tone is the airy saxophone tone that may be produced by playing with the lower lip placed close to the tip of the reed and the cheeks slightly puffed. Sub-tone is most often used in jazz, but may also occasionally be called for in contemporary classical pieces.

Exercise #5



Exercise #6



*It is also important to note that you may have difficulty producing the low register if there are mechanical problems with the instrument or if the reed and mouthpiece are not sealing well.