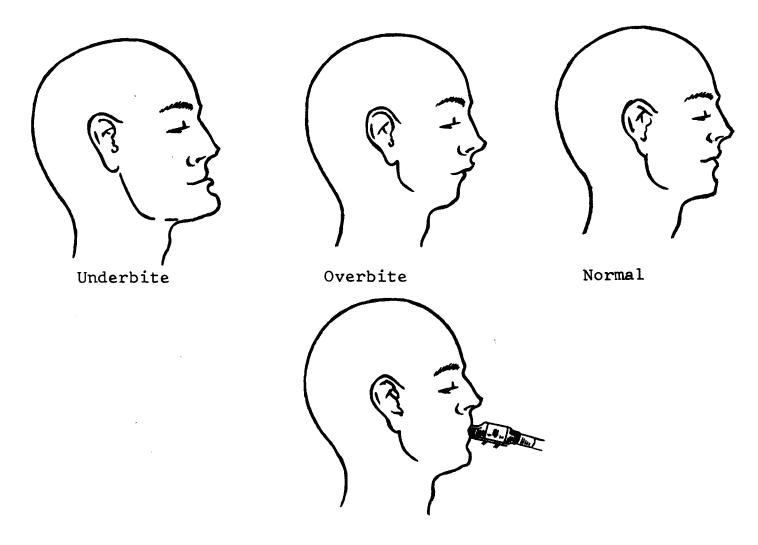
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	9
The Instrument	13
The Saxophone Family; Selection of the Instrument; Care of	
the Instrument	
The Mouthpiece	17
The Material; The Design; Miscellany	
The Reed	21
Selection of the Reed; Reed Cane; Adjusting the Reed; Reed	
Too Soft; Reed Too Stiff	
Playing Position	31
The Breathing Technique	33
The Breathing Apparatus; Developing the Breathing Process;	
The Intake; The Release; Summary	
The Embouchure	37
The Facial Mask; The Teeth; The Supporting Muscles;	
Muscle Development; Alignment of the Jaws; Mouthpiece	
Placement; The Cheeks; The Tongue; Summary	
Tone Quality	45
The Nature of Wind Instrument Tone; The Tonal Concept;	
The Body as Part of the Instrument; Tonal Terminology;	
The Vocal Approach; The Physical Problem; Focusing the	
Tone; Tonal Blend; The Saxophone Mute	
The Vibrato	54
The Nature of Good Vibrato; The Variables of Vibrato;	
Acquiring the Correct Concept; Types of Saxophone Vibrato;	
The Preliminary Steps; Transfer of the Motion; Practice	
Patterns; Ten Salient Points	
Intonation	61
Hearing the Pitch Correctly; Embouchure Tension; Holding	
the Jaw Position; Mouthpiece Placement; Mouthpiece Suita-	
bility; Correct Key Adjustment; Effect of Temperature	
Changes; The Just Versus the Tempered Scale; Pitch	
Adjustment by Special Fingerings	
Developing the Technique	70
Rhythm and Technique; Increasing the Speed; Choice of	
Fingering Position; The Alternate Fingerings; Fingering	
Options; Summary	
Attack and Release	79
Position of the Tongue; The Release	

Staccato	2
Tonguing Syllables; Developing Speed; Double-Tonguing	_
	37
Rhythm in Articulation; Legato; Marks of Articulation;	
Adapting to the Ensemble	
Phrasing and Interpretation	1
Musical Notation; Expression; The Tools of Phrasing;	
Dynamics; Movement and Breathing; Tone Color; Articu-	
lation; Vibrato	
Doubling	95
Adaptation to the Various Saxophones; Saxophone and	
Clarinet; Flute; Oboe; Bassoon; Selection of Instruments	
The Altissimo Register	8
Selected Literature	12
Methods and Etudes; Solos; Duets; Quartets; Ensembles;	
Books and Pamphlets.	

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Normal Position

## CONSIDERATIONS OF JAW AND TOOTH ALIGNMENT

## THE TEETH

Normal teeth should pose no problem if the muscular support of the embouchure is sufficient. If these muscles fail to maintain the correct position, the lower lip collapses on the teeth, which bite into the flesh. This condition is a serious one and permanent damage to the finely-textured muscles and nerves may result if it continues over a long period. One who has a chronic sore lip should immediately take steps to eliminate the cause. The discomfort alone is sufficient to inhibit the musical performance.

People with irregular lower teeth are more susceptible to a sore lip, owing to the exposed corners, which are often quite sharp. A few saxophonists have had their dentists make removable shields out of metal or plastic to provide a smooth contact with the flesh. Temporary relief may be obtained by folding a small piece of paper or cellophane over the teeth, but this is

somewhat like taking a headache remedy; it may relieve the pain but will not cure the malady.

A well-developed embouchure should provide the support required without resorting to the above methods for protection of the lip. The muscles should remain flexible as well as strong, for pressing against the hard surface of the teeth will reduce the sensitivity of the lower lip cushion so necessary in artistic performance.

Irregular upper teeth often cause a poor mouthpiece position, such as angling the mouthpiece to one side. A single upper tooth which is long or protruding may make it difficult to anchor the upper teeth properly, a type of condition which can be improved by fastening a small square of soft rubber over the point on the mouthpiece where the teeth are placed. Commercial pads are obtainable at most music stores for just this purpose. A piece of tire patch cut about  $\frac{1}{2}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches will also serve this purpose.