PROPER AND EFFECTIVE USE OF AIR

In order to maintain a good and effective embouchure you need to use the air stream to properly play (voice) the different registers of the saxophone. If you don't, you'll fall into the trap of tightening the embouchure to play the upper register, and loosening it (dropping your jaw) to play low notes.

To state it simply, the low register takes large quantities of slower, warm air, while the upper register requires very fast, cold air. While yawning, blow air into the palm of your hand and notice the warm air. Now blow a very fast stream of air through a small opening between your lips and note the cool air. As the saxophonist plays a scale from the bottom of the horn to the top, the air stream must become gradually faster and more concentrated. Here are a couple of analogies. Pretend you have a birthday cake directly in front of you. Blow out the candles! Now, pretend the cake is on a table 10 feet away. Again, blow out the candles. In order to even get the flame to flicker you must focus the air into a smaller, more concentrated stream and drive it with great speed across the room. Imagine the cake moving from right below your face, gradually, to the table 10 feet away. The result is the change in air from the low register to the high register. Here's another image. Take a garden hose and turn the water on full stream. The water flowing effortlessly out is the air for the low register. Now put a nozzle on the hose and gradually tighten it until the water shoots across the yard. That's the air for the upper register.

If you don't learn this concept, you'll compensate by tightening the embouchure as you go into the upper register, and loosening or dropping the jaw to get low notes. In its extreme, the result will be playing very flat down low with a spread, honky, uncontrolled sound, and very sharp up high with a thin, weak sound.

For best results, the embouchure should be firm but relaxed, the instrument tuned to its low G or $F\sharp$, and with properly "voiced" air, maintaining the same embouchure, learn to play the upper register in tune.

PLAYING WITH THE MOUTHPIECE ALONE

In order to bring into balance the correct embouchure, lip pressure on the reed, tongue position, proper air support, and to begin basic principles of voicing, you should practice playing on the mouthpiece alone. While you play a forte sound, you should achieve the appropriate concert pitch indicated below for each saxophone.



If your pitch is higher than the target pitch, it usually indicates you are using too much embouchure pressure. If you produce a note below the target pitch, it usually indicates the air stream is too slow (although a lower pitch can also be produced with voicing as noted below).

Once the desired pitch can be duplicated automatically without first referencing it, you should begin to play "slide whistle" effects on the mouthpiece. On alto, play the desired A concert, then, without loosening your embouchure, lower the pitch to G, then back

Overtone Exercises



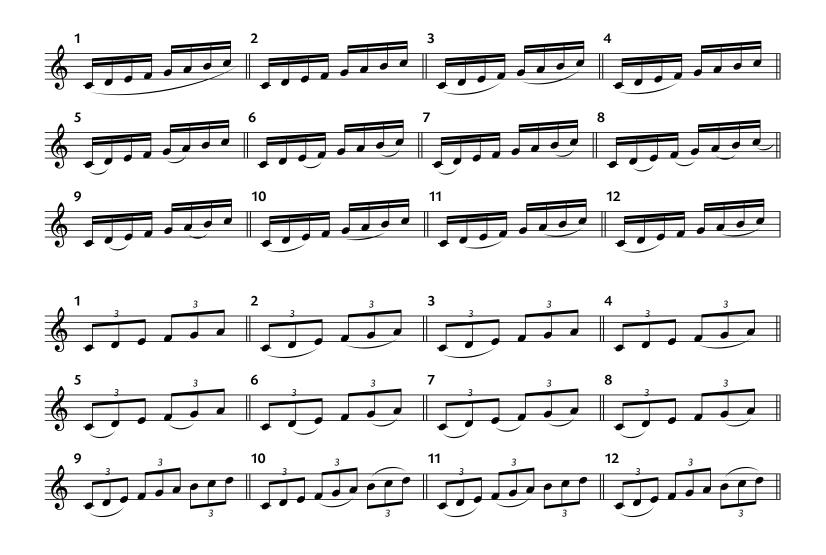
Tuning Exercise #1



#5



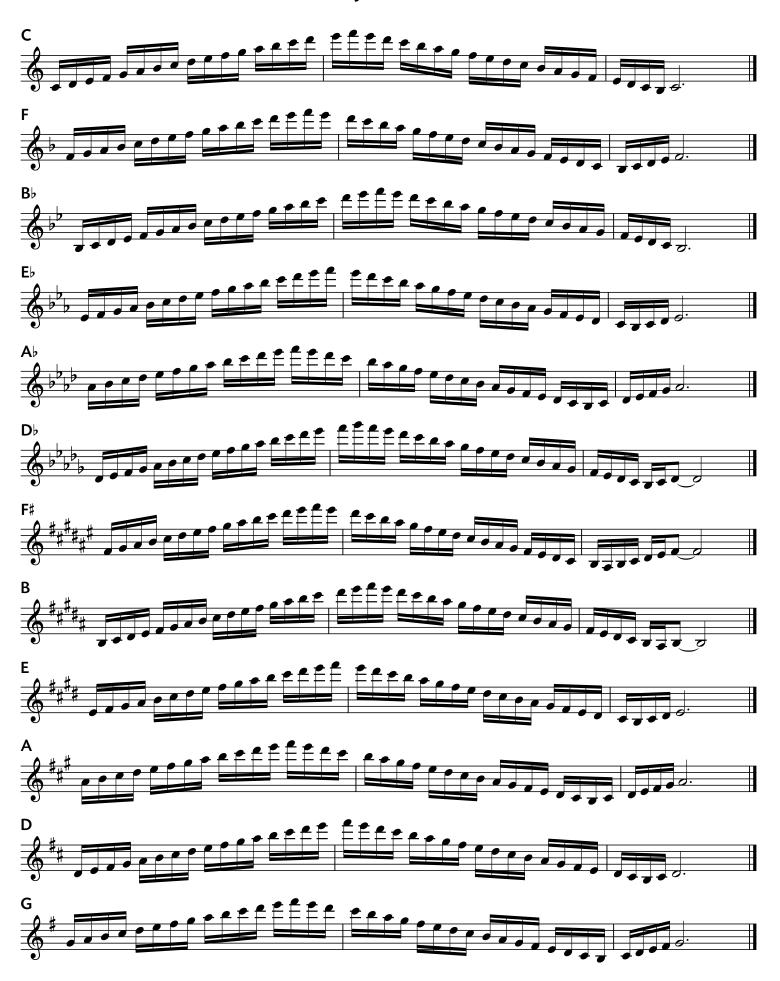
Articulations TO BE APPLIED TO ALL SCALES



Rhythmic Variations



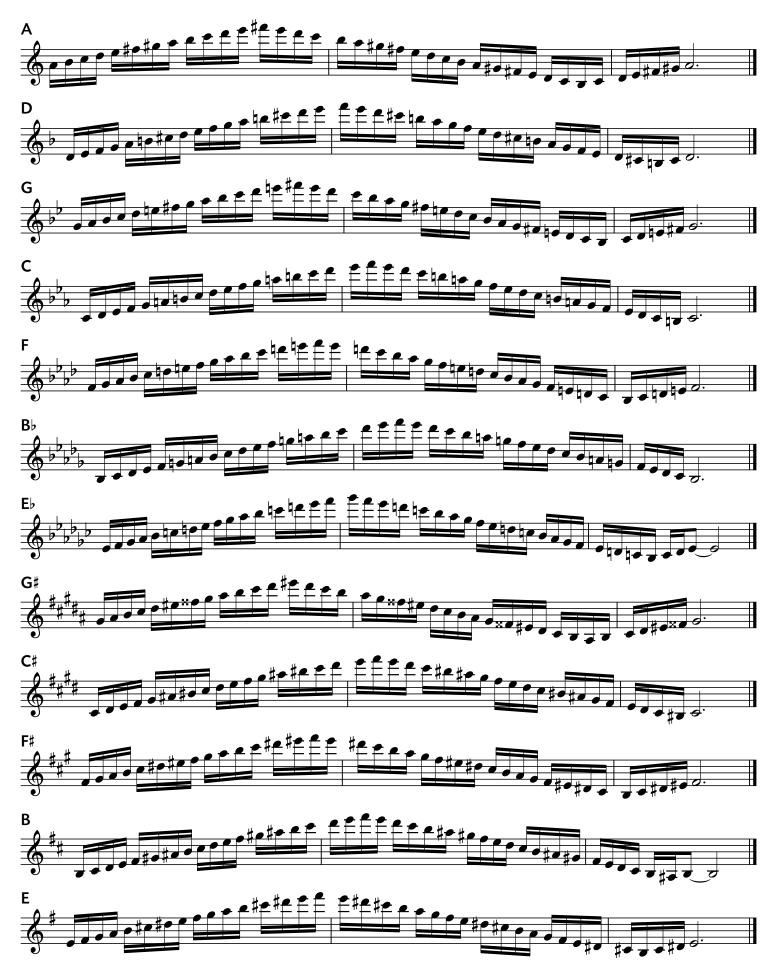
Major Scales



Major Scales in 3rds



Jazz Melodic Minor Scales



Chromatic Scales

