

# **Saxophone Talk: Tips and Tricks for Band Directors**

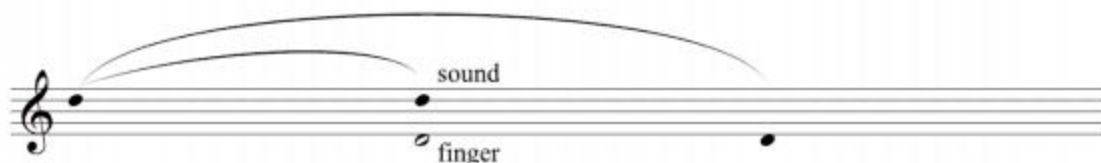
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## **Preliminary Check-up**

- Is the instrument in adjustment?
  - G#-D - TOP screw
  - 1/1 Bb fingering, tap bis - BOTTOM screw
  - low B, rock onto C# - on low B pad cup
  - Is the octave pip sealing?
- Embouchure
  - Top teeth on mouthpiece
  - Reed “cushioned” by bottom lip
  - Corners IN
  - Chin flat
- Mouthpiece placement (in the mouth)
  - About  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” from tip
  - Cut mouthpiece patch in half, place so student will “bump” teeth against it
  - Same placement for every student, regardless of anatomy
  - Soprano saxophones is less, baritone saxophone is more
- Tuning/Intonation
  - F# (middle) - F# (low) - B (middle)
    - d minor chord on piano
  - Do NOT tune to concert F (on alto/baritone) - It is the worst note on the instrument
    - Concert C on tenor/soprano
  - Mark the cork with a pen
- Tongue placement
  - Sides of tongue touching top molars
  - Think “dEE” not “tAH”
- Horn placement
  - Center vs. Side
  - Beware of Eb against the body
- Equipment
  - Reed quality and strength matter!
  - Mouthpiece patch is a good idea
  - The “Pop” Test
  - No stretchy neck straps/harness!
  - Harness for baritone saxophone

## **Fundamental Warm-Ups**

- Neck and mouthpiece only
  - I play, You play
- Mouthpiece pitch
  - Siren call
  - Match to piano or drone
  - Start on B, try to bend pitch down B major scale
- Matching - Overtones
  - Matching 1: Intro to Mode 1
    - Play middle D with octave key, remove octave key but maintain pitch of middle D, then slur down to low D. “Engage” muscles and increase airspeed



- Repeat exercise on each note of chromatic scale
- Matching 2: Mode 1
  - Play low D, finger low D but sound an octave higher, back to low D
  - Do NOT slur; separate each note
  - Repeat up the chromatic scale



- Matching 3: Intro to Mode 2
  - Slur up the C scale to G - from G finger low C again but maintain the pitch of G
  - Remember to “engage” muscles - “relax” to middle C, then low C



- Work to repeat this exercise on Bb, B, C, Db, and D to help improve playing in the low register
- Matching 4: Mode 2
  - Do NOT slur
  - Repeat on Bb, B, C, Db, D

**4A:**



**4B:**



**4C:**



**4D:**



Daily practice on these few simple exercises will help the student develop:

- Refinement of tone
- Improved air speed
- Increased embouchure flexibility
- Recognition of intonation tendencies and ear training
- Increased facility on the instrument
- Facilitation of the altissimo register