

Section II:

Beginning the Rehearsal

We become what we think about most of the time. Begin each day by thinking, then, of excellence...

All students should enter the rehearsal room as soon as possible after the first bell and **quickly, quietly, and carefully** begin setting up. *There is no time to visit or goof around.* All students must have checked the board for the rehearsal agenda, gathered all necessary equipment, supplies, music, chairs, and stands, and gotten set up and ready to play by no more than two minutes after the tardy bell. Special care should be given to setting up your chair and stand for proper instrument position, posture, and visual connection with the conductor. Also, instruments should be correctly assembled (slides, barrels, headjoints, and mouthpieces placed properly; oils, greases, water, reeds properly applied; etc.) so that *no rehearsal time is wasted* on repeated instructions or unnecessary individual adjustments by the director.

This is the time to buy reeds, oil valves, get your music in order based on the instructions on the board, throw a peace sign to your buddy, etc. Don't do this stuff during rehearsal. It wastes time and keeps us from becoming excellent. Every single minute we are together as a band is super precious. With all the new technology available, it is getting more and more difficult to actually spend time in **GROUPS**. Band is one place where everyone must be there and be attentive for everyone to enjoy success. Even one person gone or not paying attention will set the **WHOLE** band back!

Oh, yeah. **ALWAYS** have a pencil - not pen - with an eraser with you. Do not borrow one from your friend. Have your own. You will need it every stinkin' day. You might even want to keep your band pencil in this binder.

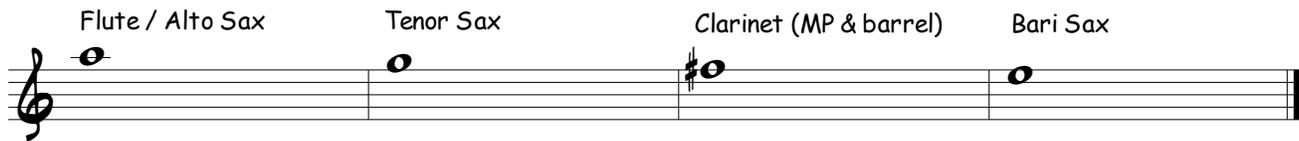
Pushups, Breathing, Sirens, and Air Drumming. *Huh?*

During this setup time, students who are ready may begin with their preliminary individual warmup activities. **Everyone** should have done some stretching and toning calisthenics (like pushups and situps) and a breathing exercise or two. Examples are: In & Out, Visual Breathing, Fighting for Air, Sipping, and The Blade.

Then use the mouthpiece to get the embouchure warmed up. Brass should buzz long tones and all the different siren patterns and maybe even buzz some simple songs. Woodwinds should also try sirens as much as possible. Then they should use a mirror and the pitches

below to work on proper embouchure formation and tension. Percussion should air drum or work on grip and stroke on a noiseless practice pad.

Here are those woodwind mouthpiece pitches. Use a tuner or piano or another instrument to make sure you have exactly the right pitch to match.



It is very important that nobody EVER move too quickly through these preliminary exercises or, worse, skip them altogether. Any serious musician who skips over the daily routine of long tones, lip slurs, articulation patterns, scales, and chorales is setting himself or herself up for eventual failure. That negatively affects the whole rest of the band program made up of dozens of people, some of whom are just beginning to learn to play.

Yes, not being responsible during just the first ten minutes of each rehearsal can make you personally responsible for holding back an entire band program of dozens of young people like yourself. Do not let this happen!

So, here is a quick checklist of all the stuff to do before each practice session or rehearsal:

- ♪ Enter rehearsal area quickly and quietly with no goofing around
- ♪ Check board for rehearsal agenda and special instructions
- ♪ Set up chair and stand in proper place and in line with conductor
- ♪ (Do some quick calisthenics and breathing)
- ♪ Collect instrument, music, and supplies and take them to seat
- ♪ Get mouthpiece, headjoint, or sticks out
- ♪ Do mouthpiece/stick work
- ♪ Assemble rest of instrument
- ♪ Double check reed placement, oiling, assembly
- ♪ Begin individual warmup with instrument until whole group is ready
- ♪ Do not play "Louie, Louie" or try to hit high Cs, yet! ☺