

# How to Check Your Technique



## Posture

- Is the chair you are sitting on suitable for you to hold your instrument safely? Does it allow you sit up straight and position yourself to use your instrument correctly?
- Before you start playing, are you sitting up straight with feet flat on the floor?
- Is your body and neck straight and not twisted?
- Are you lifting the instrument to you or are you going to your instrument? Do you need to adjust your neck strap/spike/peg/stick grip? Is your instrument the correct height? If no, make sure you make the appropriate adjustment.
- Are you moving your hands/arms/wrists properly? Are they positioned properly on the instrument?
- Are you covering the holes/keys/strings properly?
- Are your shoulders and neck relaxed and aligned?
- If you are struggling with tension in your playing, try some gentle stretches and deep breathing to relax your muscles.
- Posture is very important to all areas of your playing!

## Air Support

- Are you breathing deep into your belly?
- Your chest should not rise too much when you breathe. Lay down and focus on breathing deep into your belly making it rise and fall without moving your chest.
- Are you relaxed when you breathe? If not, lay on flat on the floor with your body properly aligned focusing on relaxing each body part then pay attention to the rise and fall of your belly.
- Are you continuously blowing your air *between* the notes? If not, play the passage slurred then play it articulated (tongued). You should be using the same air for the slurring as you do articulating.
- Practice deep breathing exercises to help strengthen and expand your lung capacity so you can play for longer!

## Embouchure (shape of your mouth)

- Are the corners of your mouth firm? Do they go in towards the mouthpiece?
- Is your chin flat, firm and pointy?
- Are you keeping your embouchure firm and stable? Don't let it move around too much! Only use the amount of muscles necessary to change pitch/create a sound.

## Articulations (tonguing)

- Make sure you are articulating (tonguing)?
- Reed players - make sure the "tip of the tongue taps the tip of the reed."
- Flute players - say 'tu' and/or 'poo' ('poo' for the high notes).
- Brass players - say 'tu' or 'taw.'
- Bass players - make sure you are doing "running man" fingers with your right hand.
- Percussion players - check your stick grip and use your wrist to change the stick height. Use your back 3 fingers to control the number of bounces and speed of the stick.
- Keep the air moving *between* the notes. The tongue only taps the air stream it does not stop it.