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## Mick's Ascending Bending Exercises

The image shows three staves of musical notation for trumpet exercises. Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff has three notes with fingerings and a slur over them. The second measure has three notes with fingerings and a slur over them. The notes are half notes. The first staff starts on low C (0) and goes up to G (13). The second staff starts on Bb (23) and goes up to G (1). The third staff starts on Bb (2) and goes up to G (0). The notes are half notes.

Play using designated fingerings but bend the second note to match the pitch of the first note. If it is difficult starting on low C as above, try starting on low A below the staff. When bending the notes make it a fast bend, no gliss between "bent" notes and normal notes. The pitch and sound will never be as good on the bent note as the correctly fingered one. The movement of the lips and tongue playing the bent note is what the exercise is all about. You will probably find it easier to bend lower notes compared with higher notes, noticeable around middle (3rd space) Bb-C. Much benefit will be gained by practicing bending from middle C up to G above the staff.

As you play this exercise notice that your tongue probably moves upward in your mouth in order to make the bend. This is similar to the movement of your tongue when doing upward lip slurs. Also notice that your lips probably need to "pucker", similar to a kiss or a light peck on a cheek. In other words they move slightly forward towards the mouthpiece. This is similar to the motion your lips should do as you ascend while playing, and most prominently when doing upward lip slurs.

The main purpose of **Ascending Bending** is to train the lips in this forward motion. Use this motion when moving to the higher register. Always use when playing upward lip slurs and ascending passages of music.

I liken it to having a bigger pillow of lip between my teeth and the mouthpiece.

This larger lip pillow helps counteract the excessive pressure we sometimes generate with our arms while pressing the trumpet and mouthpiece against our lips and teeth. This excessive pressure cuts off the blood supply and oxygen to our lip muscles and makes us tire.

Continue this exercise as high as you want, but at least one octave. Play slowly: the benefit is in playing the "bent" note.

Once this becomes comfortable and your default way of playing, extend the exercises in as many variations as you want. Using the I chord and IV chord as found in the Third Study of Clarke's Technical Studies will help reinforce this concept. Start each exercise with bent half notes or quarter notes of the key you are playing. For example, in the key of C, start with my first two measures above and then go directly to No. 52 in Clarke. Maintain the thought process and mechanics of **Ascending Bending** as you play the exercise.

This exercise and the consequent results, if done properly, addresses the bad habit of "smiling" while ascending on a brass instrument. This smiling embouchure is one of the most pervasive bad habits of trumpet playing. If young students were taught a different way of playing from the very beginning many embouchure problems would never happen.

*This one exercise is the basis of all the bending exercises in this book.*

# Scales With Trills, Advanced

*Play Slowly*

The image displays seven staves of musical notation for advanced scales with trills. Each staff represents a different key signature and includes specific fingering and bending instructions. The scales are: 1. G major (fingerings 23, 23, 23, 23, trills, 8vb); 2. D major (fingerings 23, 23, 23, 23, trills, 8vb); 3. B-flat major (fingerings 12(3), 12(3), 12(3), 12(3), trills, 8vb); 4. E-flat major (fingerings 12, 12, 12, 12, trills, 8vb); 5. A major (fingerings 1, 1, 1, 1, trills, 8vb); 6. D-flat major (fingerings 2, 2, 2, 2, trills, 8vb); 7. B-flat major (fingerings 2, 2, 2, 2, trills, 8vb). The notation includes trills (tr) and bending instructions (8vb) for the final notes of the scales.

Very Important--Please refer to pages 29 and 30 for a complete description and explanation of **Scales with Trills**.

This advanced study of **Scales with Trills** includes "ascending bending" well above the staff and is quite strenuous. Use caution and common sense as you practice these exercises and always play softly. Use the indicated fingerings, which necessitates bending these notes.\* Fingerings in pedal register your choice.

Continue these scales as high as you want, resting at least as much as you play. When training your lips with the ascending bending measures above take all the time you want on the "bent notes", keeping in mind that playing the "bent" note is when the lips assume the forward motion that cushions the mouthpiece against the teeth. As you ascend into the second octave maintain this forward motion of the lips.

\* Thanks to Charlie Decker

"With his new method, *Perfecting Your Practice for Peak Performance*, Mick Hesse has devised a sophisticated system of training for serious trumpeters. Who would have thought that it would be possible to improve on Jimmy Stamp's famous formulae? Mick Hesse has done so. He has devised excellent bending exercises - "ascending bending" he calls them - to strengthen the pucker in one's embouchure, and has also succeeded in taking the drudgery out of long-tone studies by having one compete with oneself. A trumpeter who devotes 20-30 minutes per day to three or four of Mick Hesse's chapters is guaranteed to improve noticeably and zestfully!"

**Ed Tarr, Basel Music Academy (Musikhochschule and Schola Cantorum Basiliensis) Conservatories (Musikhochschulen) in Karlsruhe, Lucerne, and Frankfurt am Main.**

"For those of us who seek ways to supplement what we already use, Mick's book is a well conceived addition to a trumpeter's library. The exercises are both practical and somewhat unique, or at least I haven't seen them set quite Mick's way in other texts. I require trumpet majors at Tennessee Tech University to purchase Mick's book and all have said they feel the exercises have been helpful in developing improved control of the instrument. They have commented also on how they like the clear and concise text to clarify the why and how of each exercise. You earned my vote for an important supplemental text of thoughtful exercises and comments to our standards (Clarke, Arban, Schlossberg, etc.)!"

**Charlie Decker, Trumpet Professor Tennessee Tech University**

"I think this is the best down to earth straight ahead trumpet book I have seen since Don Jacoby published "Jake's Method" in 1990. I loved his book and I love your book, for many of the same reasons. It has clear practical reasons for doing the exercises, based upon real experience and years of careful thought on the subject. As I went from page to page, I cannot tell you how many times I thought "yeah" yes! it's about time!! Your list of ten "further study materials" could not be better! So many concepts you have put down I could not agree more with and I appreciate the difficulty in sometimes getting these simple but complex ideas on paper in a concise clear way. I am truly impressed with this book and I am going to require it of my students starting next Fall. Congrats!!"

**Steve Leisring, Assistant Professor of Trumpet University of Kansas**

"Your careful systematic approach is right on target. If one can work successfully in your book, he/she will have a big advantage over those who just hope things work out."

**Phil Collins, former Principal Trumpet Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestra**

"Mick's new book offers sound, practical advice and some new exercises for building trumpet skills. His "Ascending Bending" routines are unique; they help to build an efficient, strong and flexible embouchure. The flow studies alternating between just two fingerings help to establish constant airflow and smoothness of musical line. Any trumpet player will benefit from this book!"

**Chase Sanborn, Jazz musician at heart, guest artist, clinician and author, University of Toronto**

"*Perfecting Your Practice for Peak Performance* is a superb and valuable book for those serious about developing their trumpet

skills to the highest level. I use Mick's book myself and find that it keeps me at the peak of my ability. One of the best features of the book is that it can be used at nearly any level, since this book is tailored for any player by varying the degree of difficulty. The bending exercises are especially helpful in developing tone and flexibility: In addition I have found them especially beneficial for ear training. They require that the performer hear and produce the pitch without assistance from the horn or valves. I also like the evaluative chart that helps my students assess their strengths and weaknesses. I have performed with Mick for a number of years and am amazed by his marvelous playing, certainly the result of his thorough, systematic study of trumpet and his practice methods found in this excellent book. Bravo Mick!"

**Terry Schwartz Professor, Wheaton College: Conservatory of Music Wheaton, IL**

"Over the Easter break I worked with your book and all I can say is "WOW! THANK-YOU" Your method has helped me to play more efficiently as well as adding substantially to my high range...but more importantly it is a joy to play the trumpet again! My students are also enthusiastic....so we would like to order 10 more copies please!"

**Andrew Evans, Lecturer in Trumpet/Chair, Brass Studies Unit Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

"Mick Hesse's new book is jammed with great ideas about trumpet playing and music making. I've tried several of his techniques (that were new to me) in my teaching and they really work! I can recommend this little gem highly and enthusiastically."

**David Baldwin, Professor, School of Music University of Minnesota, Board of Directors- International Trumpet Guild**

I have used Mick's *Peak Performance* in my teaching studio at Northern Illinois for the past 5 years and found it to be an invaluable resource for embouchure development and control. There is a noticeable difference in the tone, range and dynamic control for my students who use this method each day. I highly recommend Mick's ideas on embouchure development and use them myself.

**Dr. Mark Ponzio, Professor of Trumpet Northern Illinois University**

Mick's approach to note bending is the first I've found that's proven beneficial to my playing. His book contains ideas, descriptions, and exercises very useful for building range, endurance, and efficiency. Practicing for Peak Performance is a great addition to any trumpeter's library.

**Sergeant First Class Ward Yager, The U.S. Army Field Band (Washington, DC)**

"Mick Hesse has assembled one of the most comprehensive collections of practical studies I've encountered as a studio professor. The relevant, consolidated exercises have such viable application to what any trumpeter needs to be successful. The exercises are unique yet they support time honored concepts pursued by students and professionals alike. This method would make a wonderful and effective addition to any student or professional player's daily routine immediately."

**John T. Cord, DMA Luther College**