

Carmine Caruso Method

Adapted by Julie Landsman

This is a method that helps prepare your body to play music.

1. TAP YOUR FOOT. Tapping your foot helps the body to feel the rhythm needed to coordinate over two hundred muscles. More than just thinking about the timing, foot tapping connects the feel of the time to the body (kinesthetically). Feel the downbeats and upbeats.
2. Keep the mouthpiece on your lips throughout the entire exercise. This reduces the chances of resetting the embouchure in a different place on your mouth, and makes it easier to develop good chops.
3. Keep the blow steady and constant. Always move the air through the instrument when playing anything! If the air stream is steady and well supported, then it is easier to develop a good embouchure. Here is an analogy: think of the lips as skis on the water. As long as the boat is moving, the skis stay on the water. When the boat slows down, the skis dig in, and when the boat stops, you fall off. This is what happens to the lips when the air is not being steadily pushed through them. An air stream that is constantly feeding the lips will develop a better balance of muscles.
4. Breathe through the nose. This rule goes along with #2. Try to maintain the same setting of the embouchure while breathing. This reduces the number of variables involved in playing the horn, and helps develop a healthy embouchure more quickly. If you experience stuffed sinuses, breathe through the corners of the mouth, and try not to disturb the setting.
5. Ready – Set – Play! Whether practicing Caruso exercises or any music at all, it is essential before starting to set up one measure of subdivided time. Whether action is starting a note, moving to another note, or ending a note, the subdivision is equally important. (i.e. )

The importance of being ready and set to play through precision subdivision and timing cannot be over-emphasized! Whether practicing Caruso exercises, orchestral excerpts, playing in orchestra, or chamber group, it is essential to be ready to play well before the first note comes out. Therefore, always, follow the rule of giving your body at least one measure of subdivided time before your first entrance. Having your body ready before the note comes out gives you a huge advantage!

6. Unless otherwise indicated, all exercises are to be executed at a healthy mezzo forte; no louder.

II. LIPS/MOUTHPIECE/HORN

Do this exercise in this suggested sequence, however, make it struggle-free and with as much ease as possible.

- 1) Buzz all pitches only with the lips.
- 2) Buzz all pitches on the mouthpiece.
- 3) Play all notes on the horn with valves. Version A: finger the first note, bend the pitch to the second note. Versions B and C: finger both notes.

The three buzzes (steps 1-3) do not need to be exactly the same. The goal is to keep the blow steady, and maintain the buzz throughout the entire exercise. Attempting to manipulate the embouchure in any way will inhibit the progress of this exercise. Just produce the sound in the easiest way possible, without trying to place the chops in a certain way. Do not force the lips into place, even if all three events are slightly different from each other.

If comfortable, continue exercises lower.

♩ = 60

A.

B.

B. T

C.

You may choose the easiest note to start. These exercises are suggested starting places. Do only as many that work with ease. In due time, expand outwards from your starting note. Do not free buzz higher than a third space C, and descend as low as is comfortable.

