

Intonation/Tuning on Trumpet

First, Sing the Intervals.

Learn to hear and sing intervals. Since trumpet playing is so similar to singing it is essential that you learn to sing intervals and recognize your pitch. Your vocal tone doesn't have to be nice, but it has to be in tune.

Use Drones

Play scales against a drone. This helps you with intervals and hearing harmonies.

Sources of drones

- Electronic tuner drone.
- Electronic keyboard.
- Recording of you playing a drone.

With the intervals firmly established, a great way to practice intonation is to grab a good trumpet-playing friend, sit down and play some long tones. Let your friend play a low c, and play an f above that. Move the f up and down (using slides whenever possible) until you start to hear "resultant tones," which create annoying buzzing sounds in your ear. Listening carefully, you'll hear a pedal f produced. Doing the same with a c and a g, a pedal c will be produced. If you can get the resultant tone in tune, then your interval is perfectly in tune. Try this using a bunch of different notes (two notes that are part of a major arpeggio work best) and discover what resultant tone comes out (yes, there is a pattern to be discovered here). Over time, you'll discover certain tendencies (the 12 combination wants to go down, for example, and the same E that is perfectly in tune in E major is too high in C major), but most of all, you'll learn what resultant tones sound and feel like. If you hear these while playing, you'll be playing in tune.

Drones

Sensitize your ear to precise intonation. Identify intervals. Being able to identify and tune intervals is the basis of relative pitch. A drone is a sustained reference pitch. Listening to a drone as you practice markedly improves your ability to hear and control subtle variations in pitch. Every note you play forms part of an interval relative to a key center established by the drone. Pitch discrepancies are revealed with crystal clarity. The stability of pure intervals exerts a powerful gravitational pull. The overall effectiveness of the practice session is enhanced through increased

mental focus and the meditative aspect of the drone. Provide a root-fifth drones in every key. The root-fifth combination establishes a key center more precisely than a single pitch.

Buzzing

Mouthpiece buzzing is also very good even though it sounds strange.

Buzzing exercises help you to tune your embouchure. When buzzing you can't rely on valves so you really have to grapple with lip tuning and you actually have to evaluate your pitch.

If you hear the pitch clearly in your mind and playing (buzzing) to the resonant center of the individual notes that you are mechanically producing with valves you will produce a much more confident and dependable sound.

Play duets.

Arbans Duets (*Arbans Book*)
Applebaum strings duets book 1,2,3

Tuners

An electronic tuner reveals a lot about your own sense of pitch and the intonation quirks of your instrument. By learning which notes on your instrument tend to be sharp or flat, you instinctively move in the right direction when playing in an ensemble.

Every note needs to be tuned. The purpose of the tuner is to set your horn so that you need to make the minimal adjustment to each note. Beyond that, the tuner is fairly useless in an actual playing situation since you are tuning to the other players and to the actual key and scale you are working with. While practicing, the tuner can verify if you are actually matching the pitch you think you are matching. This can really help prevent self-deception. Also, a good tuner can help you identify how consistent your tone is and what sorts of motions, breathing and posture harm or help your intonation.

Spend lots of time looking at a tuner but when you are tuning with a partner it is helpful to have them look at the tuner rather than you. When getting in

tune, be careful that you don't lip the note and try to please the tuner then fall back into bad (or different) habits once the tuner is off. Your posture, breathing, volume and embouchure should be exactly the same when you are tuning as when you are performing.

Very Good Basic Valve slide and drone tuning discussion (10minute) Fortissimo Project
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMF13s0FINY>

Warming up. Brian estimates that it takes 60 seconds of consistent playing at room temperature before an instrument reaches its regular pitch. It starts out very flat and gradually rises to pitch.