

Notes for Clivetheside

To develop a 6 octave range I believe a few basic principals must be followed in order to lay a solid foundation upon which extreme tone can consistently be performed.

- Always use the same mouthpiece. Swapping mouthpieces confuses the nerve ending around the lips therefore the ability to pitch can be impaired. To have security on a variety of mouthpieces each mouthpiece must be practiced on in equal amounts. Clearly there are some players who have a 'gift' if you can call it that and swapping mouthpieces has no effect on their performances. Bones Malone and James Morrison are two players who change instruments without detrimental effect on their playing come to mind.
- I use middle F as the centre tone on the trombone and build out from there as demonstrated in the PDF file. By working both up and down in equal amounts the range can be the range can be securely developed without pain. When working the exercises, at the point when a tone refuses to sound that's the time to stop trying to push the range. Move onto something else to play and come back to the range building work tomorrow.
- Play everyday! How many times did I hear 'I've practiced everyday except Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday' to me everyday means 7/365. Even if only the warm up has been played the benefits of a daily play will be noticed within a month.
- Always start your playing day with a careful warm up. Don't go straight into a technical demanding piece. The more time you spend on warming up the longer your lip will last on the gig.
- Use the least amount of pressure on your lips from the mouthpiece as possible. In other words the pressure from the mouthpiece should only be enough to create a seal to stop air escaping from the side of the mouthpiece.
- Use the correct equipment for the type of playing you are going to do. This is one I feel a lot of people get very wrong. There are hoards of players out there making medium bore trombone sounds, which is the sound they want to make, on a large bore instruments. A waste of both trombones and effort.