

Practical Applications #3

Embouchure Boot Camp

*A Progressive Daily Routine for the Serious
Instrumentalist*

Bassoon



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Summer 2012



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WARNING!!

YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENLIST IN A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PROGRAM.
IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED FOR THE FOLLOWING SIDE EFFECTS,
CLOSE THIS OPERATIONS MANUAL AT ONCE!

SIDE EFFECTS OF USING THIS BOOK AS DIRECTED:

1. A sudden belief that your band director has started to pick easier music
2. A sneaking suspicion that band rehearsal has gotten shorter because you haven't even broken a sweat yet.
3. A profound distortion of reality - what was once fast music is now quite slow and easily played
4. "Buff-ness" is evident in the area of the lower face.
5. An increased sense of confidence accompanied by a strong desire to play more exciting and challenging music.
6. In short - YOU WILL BECOME A BETTER PLAYER!



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



ENLISTMENT INFORMATION



To the enlistee:

Welcome to Embouchure Boot Camp, Private! By enlisting in Boot Camp, you have shown that you are a serious musician who is looking to improve your playing. Before you begin, the Drill Sergeant has some orders:

General Orders No. 1-5

Embouchure Boot Camp - Rules and Regulations

1. The musical drills contained in this Boot Camp Operations Manual must be practiced DAILY. You will not find success by returning casually to these exercises. They must be played every day with PURPOSE. Plot your progress using the PROMOTION CHART on page 6. Boot Camp is not a casual experience; it involves commitment...YOU MUST ENLIST!
2. None of the drills in Embouchure Boot Camp should be played for the sake of "getting through them." True improvement will result when the drills are played thoughtfully while taking each of the Drill Sergeant's Orders (listed at the beginning of each section of the manual) into careful consideration. The drills must not just be played, but played correctly.
3. **ALL** drills that contain metronome markings **MUST** be played with a metronome.
4. The exercises and drills in the Boot Camp Operations Manual do not consist of an entire practice session. They are meant to give the player a consistent and thorough routine that is played every day before etudes, solos and literature are practiced. The number of drills that are done each day will vary depending on time constraints. A normal routine should take 30 minutes. If the private has only 10 minutes on a particular day, then 1 drill from every section of the manual should be played. At no time should 0 drills be considered - see General Order No. 1.
5. A private lesson teacher is strongly encouraged to progress through this manual. However, many situations arise and every effort has been made to give detailed and concise instructions for every drill. If you read these carefully and put them into practice, you should be able to put yourself through boot camp.

Your band is proud of the commitment and dedication that you have already shown by enlisting in Embouchure Boot Camp. You will need to continue to show these traits in order to progress through Boot Camp. Who knows, if you work hard and follow the rules and regulations listed above, you might graduate boot camp with the rank of Command Chief Master Sergeant. Only one question remains: Do you have what it takes?

Sincerely,

Drill Sergeant
Embouchure Boot Camp



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



PRACTICE GUIDELINES



To the enlistee:

Consider these guidelines to help yourself stay on track for daily practice:

- ✎ Set a regular time to practice.
- ✎ Find a comfortable, well-lit, quiet place to practice, preferably the largest room in the house to help with sound development.
- ✎ Practice standing up, not sitting.
- ✎ Use your metronome consistently.
- ✎ Practicing in short amounts daily is much more preferable than cramming. Developing instrumental technique is much like an exercise workout—teach your muscles by doing a little bit daily.
- ✎ Take frequent breaks if you are more advanced and practicing more than 45 minutes per day. Sessions of playing longer than 45 minutes can cause muscular problems such as tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome if one does not rest frequently.
- ✎ Don't forget that the ultimate goal is not to produce the notes you see on the page as you would type in words on a keyboard. The goal is to produce beautiful music. Never forget to listen to yourself and make music as you practice. Try to mimic the sounds of your favorite players.

To the Commanding Officers of the Household (i.e. Parents):

Congratulations, your student has just enrolled in Embouchure Boot Camp! In order to give your student the best opportunity for success, please consider the following guidelines to assist in the quality of their practice.

- ✎ Stay connected. Encourage your student to practice and reward his/her hard work with recognition. Instruments are not quiet, so be sure to support your student's practice time even if you are reading or watching TV.
- ✎ Give your student a place to practice that is free of distractions, preferably in the largest room in the house. This will help develop projection by practicing filling up a large space with sound.
- ✎ Allow the student to leave the instrument out so it is easily accessible for practice. The safest way to do this is to purchase an instrument stand. Your enlistee will practice more often if the instrument is visible and handy.
- ✎ Help your student to stay on track by reminding him/her to practice in a way that helps them to realize their goals. Use language like, "I know it has been a busy day, but if you practice today, you will stay on track to achieve your goal of getting placed in the top band next year."



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



PROMOTION CHART



Every drill in this book is intended to be played every day as part of a daily practice routine. However, it is more than likely that this will be impossible for the Embouchure Boot Camp enlistee to achieve immediately. Therefore, it is necessary to plot a course through the book starting with the rank of "Private" and ending with the rank of "Command Chief Master Sergeant."

Each exercise in Embouchure Boot Camp is preceded by a military rank insignia. This denotes the difficulty level of each exercise and helps the enlistee (you) chart your progress through boot camp. The chart below lists what Embouchure Boot Camp exercises that need to be performed in order to achieve the different military ranks. All ranks should drill each warm-up (Breathing, Stretch Drills, Register Drills) every day.

Good Luck on your journey from Private to Command Chief Master Sergeant!

Insignia	Rank	Single Tonguing	Mechanism Exercises	Technical Exercises	Major Scale Exercises	Minor Scale Exercises	Date of Promotion
	Private						
	Private 1 st Class						
	Sergeant						
	Staff Sergeant						
	Technical Sergeant						
	Master Sergeant	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	ALL Tech Srgt Drills at 90% of Top Speed	
	Senior Master Sergeant						
	Chief Master Sergeant						
	Command Chief Master Sergeant	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	ALL Exercises Performed at Top Speed	



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



BREATHING



Breathing is the MOST important aspect of bassoon playing and is the FIRST thing you should practice every day. Great breathing will aid in fixing every playing problem. However, most players never practice their breathing! This breathing drill helps to practice controlling the large amount of air needed to play. The most important part of this drill is to STAY RELAXED. This is especially important during the "suspend" portion of the drill. Suspending the air is NOT holding your breath. Your throat should stay open during this entire drill. Suspend the air by simply not breathing in or out while keeping your muscles totally relaxed. Sniff a small amount of air at the nose to be sure that you are suspending your air and NOT holding your breath.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- Do all five parts of the drill one after another to achieve maximum relaxed respiration. Finish the eight-count drill and go on immediately to the four-count and so on...
- The first part of your body to expand during inhalation is your mid-section.
- During the eight and four-count inhalations, suck in the air at the lips as if you were sipping a milkshake through a straw, slow and steady.
- For the eight and four-count exhalations, put your embouchure into the playing position with the opening small enough to provide resistance. Blow steadily all the way to the end.
- For the one count inhalations, your mouth should look like you are eating a hot potato in order to inhale quickly.
- Remember to breathe or exhale all the way to the end. Do not allow yourself to stop the breathing motion during this exercise.
- SUSPEND** your air; don't hold your breath.



Set your metronome to: ♩ = 60

Inhale	Suspend	Exhale	Frequency
8 counts	8 counts	8 counts (pp)	Do this 2 times
4 counts	4 counts	4 counts	Do this 3 times
1 count	4 counts	4 counts	Do this 3 times
1 count	4 counts	1 count	Do this 4 times
1 count	(none)	1 count (fff)	Do this 7 times



Some players find it useful to pretend to pull back a bow during inhalation (ready), remaining in the fully extended position during the "suspend" portion (aim), and watching the arrow fly through some far-away target during exhalation (fire!).








STRETCH DRILLS



The first notes you play on the instrument should be very relaxing. The first notes should start in the comfortable middle range and gradually stretch to the outer registers of the instrument, much like an athlete preparing for a big game. Musicians are, after all, athletes of the small muscles.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Play all stretch drills at a comfortable mezzo forte dynamic.
-  Concentrate on keeping a full sound in all ranges. These drills are meant to be played in free time. If a note does not feel comfortable, hold it until it does. The second exercise in particular should be played freely. Hold the top and bottom note of each phrase until your embouchure feels comfortable.









REGISTER DRILLS



Once you have played your first notes of the day, it is important to remind yourself of what a great embouchure looks and feels like. Register drills are the ideal way to do this. As a bassoonist you are required to change registers on the instrument quickly and easily. It is impossible to execute the following exercises without a great embouchure, air speed and proper finger technique.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Perform the following drills with a metronome.
-  Concentrate on increasing the air speed and raising the tongue when performing the octave leaps.
-  Flicking Exercise Only - numbers correspond to numbers in exercise
 1. Play low "A" in normal manner (whisper key closed).
 2. Continue playing low "A" but lift the whisper key and position thumb above the "A" key. (Bb, B, and C - position thumb over "C" key) Do not tongue on step 2.
 3. Lightly depress "A" key, holding key open throughout step 3. (Responses will be further improved by increasing air speed and changing voicing from "oe" to "ou").
 4. Release "A" key and do not tongue. Position thumb over whisper key and prepare to repeat the 4-step exercise. Always begin step 1 with the tongue.

Half-hole Exercise



Flicking Exercise



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



Frank Morelli

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Great improvement can be achieved by simply listening to great bassoon players and trying to mimic their sound.

Listen to one of the greatest bassoon players performing today - Frank Morelli. Frank teaches at the Julliard School in New York and performs in chamber groups and as a soloist.

In the recording on the right, Frank Morelli performs some famous bassoon music from the Baroque Period.

CHECK IT OUT!!





SINGLE TONGUING



Articulation refers to how the player begins and ends a note. Tonguing is a specific kind of articulation that creates a clear start to each note. There are two primary forces at work in this drill that you must coordinate: your air and your tongue. The air must stay constant throughout the exercise while the tongue gently flicks the reed.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- ☞ Support your sound at ALL times! Think about increasing your air speed all the way to the last note.
- ☞ Drills must be played with a metronome.
- ☞ The note should start with the articulation then move quickly to a full sound. The tongue just needs to touch the reed - NOT hit the reed.
- ☞ The act of tonguing is a motion DOWN and AWAY from the reed.
- ☞ The top of the tongue close to the tip should touch very close to the tip of the reed. This should be relatively easy if the embouchure and tongue are in the right position. You should not have to do anything extreme in order to make this happen.
- ☞ Perform this drill at many different dynamic levels.



♩ = 96-144

Drill 1: Bassoon, 4/4 time, tempo 96-144. The drill consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The third staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The fourth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music features a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some measures containing triplets. The first staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The second staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The third staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The fourth staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The drill is marked 'simile...' in the middle of the first staff.



♩ = 80-120

Drill 2: Bassoon, 4/4 time, tempo 80-120. The drill consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The third staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The fourth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music features a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some measures containing triplets. The first staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The second staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The third staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The fourth staff has a 'T' under each note, indicating a tongue stroke. The drill is marked 'simile...' in the middle of the first staff.



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...




$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...




$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...




$\text{♩} = 80-120$

T T T T

simile...




Karen Geoghegan

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Check out one of the most promising young bassoonists - Karen Geoghegan.

Karen Geoghegan is a Scottish bassoonist that was still in college when she got a recording contract with Chandos!

The recording on the right showcases Karen's performances of some of the best-known bassoon concertos.

CHECK IT OUT!












MECHANISM DRILLS



Mastering the mechanics of the bassoon requires much practice and attention to detail. Bassoonists are often asked to perform rapid technical passages and leaps with the instrument. The exercises below will help develop that skill.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Drills MUST be practiced with a metronome.
-  All repeats should be taken 8-10 times.
-  Only increase the metronome speed when you have played the exercise flawlessly. It is better to spend a little more time at a slower speed and get it right, than try to push the tempo too soon and end up practicing mistakes.
-  Practice quick and precise fingering! Even though these exercises are slurred, the changes between the notes need to be precise. If the fingering requires multiple keys, focus on putting the keys down at the same time.
-  Keep as little movement in the embouchure as possible throughout the drill.
-  STAY RELAXED with great hand position. Stop when you feel tension in the body.

$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$



$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

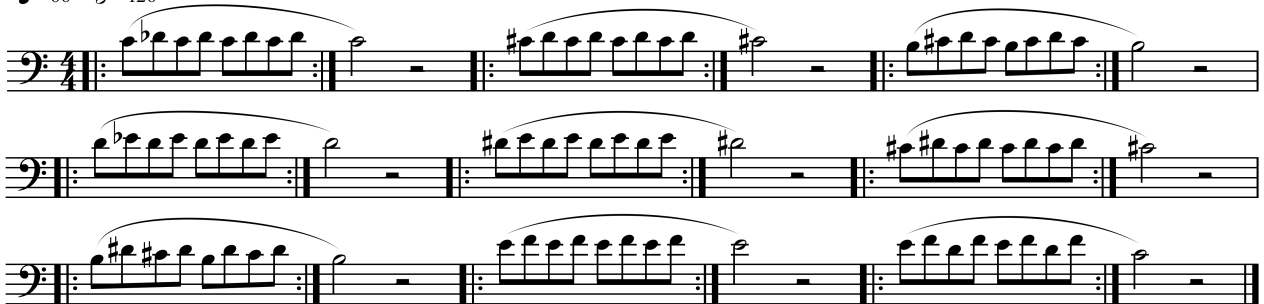
$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$



$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$



$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$



Klaus Thunemann

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Listen to one of the most beautiful bassoon sounds of all time - Klaus Thunemann.

Klaus Thunemann is an influential German bassoonist that has an extensive recording discography.

The recording on the right showcases his wonderful playing on the Hummel and Weber bassoon concertos.

CHECK IT OUT!!



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ -- } \text{♩} = 120$

The musical score consists of five staves. The first four staves are in 4/4 time and feature a series of eighth-note patterns, often beamed together in groups of four or eight. The fifth staff is in 2/4 time and features a series of quarter-note patterns. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, and *ff*, and includes repeat signs and slurs.



Minnesota Orchestra Bassoon Section

John Miller Jr., Mark Kelley, J. Christopher Marshall, Norbert Nielubowski

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Check out the hometown team! You can listen to all the recordings in the world, but there is nothing that compares to hearing great music played live. Take a trip down to Minneapolis and hear the Minnesota Orchestra's wonderful bassoon section.

How would these great players perform the drills in this book?










TECHNICAL DRILLS



So far in your routine you have worked the embouchure, tongue and fingers. Now it is time to give the fingers a workout chromatically and within a certain key. Work for relaxed control of your keys. Try to keep tension at a minimum throughout each drill and gradually increase the tempo. Keep the tempo the same for a whole week and then increase it by a small margin. You will be surprised where you are in a few short months!

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Drills MUST be practiced with a metronome.
-  Only increase the metronome speed when you have played the exercise flawlessly. It is better to spend a little more time at a slower speed and get it right, than try to push the tempo too soon and end up practicing mistakes.
-  Practice quick and precise fingering! Even though these exercises are slurred, the changes between the notes need to be precise. If the fingering requires multiple keys, focus on putting the keys down at the same time.
-  Keep as little movement in the embouchure as possible throughout the drill.

$\text{♩} = 160 - \text{♩} = 112$



3x's

3x's

simile



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

$\text{♩} = 160 - \text{♩} = 112$



3x's

3x's

simile

musical notation for the first section of the Embouchure Boot Camp, Bassoon part, featuring six staves of music in 3/4 time, marked with a tempo of 160-112.

$\text{♩} = 48-90$



musical notation for the second section of the Embouchure Boot Camp, Bassoon part, featuring five staves of music in 6/8 time, marked with a tempo of 48-90.



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

♩ = 84-124



A musical score for bassoon, consisting of six staves. The first staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The subsequent five staves are in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

♩ = 84-124



A musical score for bassoon, consisting of six staves. The first staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The subsequent five staves are in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon



♩ = 60-112

Sheet music for Bassoon, featuring 12 staves of music. The music is written in bass clef and 4/4 time. The key signature changes across the staves: Staff 1 (F#), Staff 2 (Bb), Staff 3 (F#), Staff 4 (Bb), Staff 5 (F#), Staff 6 (Bb), Staff 7 (Bb), Staff 8 (F#), Staff 9 (Bb), Staff 10 (F#), Staff 11 (Bb), and Staff 12 (F#). The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups, and includes slurs and repeat signs. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.









MAJOR SCALE DRILLS



These drills are the final challenge for your daily routine. Without exercising your abilities in every musical language (key), you will be limited in what you can accomplish as a musician. Scales are the building blocks of all of the music that we play. If you know these scales, everything becomes easier. Music will become easier to play because you have seen the notes before. Basically, when you practice scales, you are traveling into the future. You are making it easier to play music that you will see later. Cool!

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

-  Support your sound at ALL times!
-  Practice all scales with a metronome marking that you are comfortable with and gradually increase the tempo.
-  Practice 2 scales a day for 6 days. This way you can get through all 12 in a week! (Gb Major and F# Major are enharmonic scales, meaning that they are spelled differently but sound the same and have the same fingerings. So even though there are 13 scales listed, there are technically only 12 different pitch levels.)
-  Practice your least favorite scales the most! Chances are that you will have your favorite and least favorite scales. Chances are even better that your least favorite scales are the ones that need the most practice. Don't just practice the scales that make you feel good, practice the scales that will make you a better musician.

C Major Scale



F Major Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

G Major Scale



Bb Major Scale



D Major Scale



Eb Major Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

A Major Scale



Ab Major Scale



E Major Scale



Db Major Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

B Major Scale



Gb Major Scale



F# Major Scale





MINOR SCALE DRILLS



Many students get around to practicing their major scales; many choose to forget about the minor scales. Once again, without exercising your abilities in every musical language (key), you will be limited in what you can accomplish as a musician. The minor scales drills below utilize the melodic version of the minor scale. This means that there is a raised 6th and 7th tone ascending and the entire natural minor scale descending. Since the natural minor scale is just the major scale starting on the 6th note, you have already practiced the natural minor scale. It is the most efficient use of time to drill the melodic minor scale in these studies.

Drill Sergeant's Orders:

- ✈ Support your sound at ALL times!
- ✈ Practice all scales with a metronome marking that you are comfortable with and gradually increase the tempo.
- ✈ Practice 2 scales a day for 6 days. This way you can get through all 12 in a week! (E^b Minor and D[#] Minor are enharmonic scales, meaning that they are spelled differently but sound the same and have the same fingerings. So even though there are 13 scales listed, there are technically only 12 different pitch levels.)
- ✈ Once again, practice your least favorite scales more than your favorite scales.
- ✈ Focus on centering your tone on each note. These scales are more unfamiliar than the major scales so effort must be made to get them "in your ear."

A Minor Scale



D Minor Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

E Minor Scale



G Minor Scale



B Minor Scale



C Minor Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

F# Minor Scale



F Minor Scale



C# Minor Scale



Bb Minor Scale



Embouchure Boot Camp - Bassoon

G# Minor Scale



Eb Minor Scale



D# Minor Scale





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Very few of the exercises contained in this book are completely original. Most have been compiled and adapted from proven exercise books from the entire spectrum of wind playing and from the many clinics and supplementary material from the American Band College Summers of 2010, 2011 and 2012. Effort was made to pick the most necessary exercises and adapt them to each instrument in the series. The following resources proved immensely helpful:

Advanced Method Vol.1 for Bassoon - Rubank

The American Band College Summer 2010 Notebook and Clinics
David Rachor

The American Band College Summer 2011 Notebook and Clinics
Jim Lotz

The American Band College Summer 2012 Notebook and Clinics
Daryl Durran

Guide to Teaching Woodwinds - Frederick W. Westphal

Method for Bassoon - Julius Weissenborn

Six Days "Daily Routines for Trombone" - Scott Moore

Technical Studies for Cornet - H.L. Clarke

Technical Studies Book 1 - Allen Vizzutti

