

Breathing:

Breathing and air control are the two most important aspects of brass playing. As with all other techniques, breathing must be practiced to be mastered. This sounds ridiculous since we are breathing every hour of every day, but breathing in relationship to playing a brass instrument is a completely different thing.

Brass players must learn to take in as much air, in as short a time, as possible. The lungs are very large organs, but in general use; we do not exploit their full potential. As brass players, we must develop the lungs, and the surrounding muscles, to the fullest.

Some exercises that I have found to be of benefit are:

1. Sit ups - bent kneed, sets of 25
2. Leg raises - lying flat on the floor, SLOWLY lift your legs till they are over your head, KEEPING YOUR KNEES LOCKED AT ALL TIMES
3. General flexibility exercises - brass instruments are physically demanding to play, therefore you must stay in decent physical shape.
4. Jogging - very beneficial to overall cardio-vascular conditioning.

A few words about breath support. The diaphragm has nothing to do with supporting the tone on an instrument, in fact; it has no function in exhalation. Still, it is in this region that constant energy must be expended when playing a brass instrument. Be careful not to confuse volume of air and intensity of air. Volume is how we produce just that . . . volume. Intensity involves how fast the air stream is moving, and is how we produce high notes. They are not the same. It is possible to blow with high intensity and little volume, or vice versa.

The level of breath support changes as we move into different registers of the horn. In the low register, the support is positioned low in the abdomen, thus yielding a long air column and low air stream intensity. As we move up to the upper register, the support should move up as well. This gives us a continually moving air column. The shorter the air column, the more air intensity, and thus the higher the note. These are fundamental concepts in brass playing, but ones that are often overlooked. Careful practice and concentration will yield excellent results.

The following pages are excerpted from The Science of Breath. Included is the concept of the **Yogi Complete Breath**. Read carefully and follow the breathing exercises. If this method of breathing is adopted, you will find brass playing has become noticeably easier.

The Four Methods of Respiration

In the consideration of the question of respiration, we must begin by considering the mechanical arrangements whereby the respiratory movements are effected. The mechanics of respiration manifest through (1) the elastic movement of the lungs, and (2) the activities of the sides and bottom of the thoracic cavity in which the lungs are contained. The thorax is that portion of the trunk between the neck and the abdomen, the cavity of which (known as the thoracic cavity) is occupied mainly by the lungs and heart. It is bounded by the spinal column, the ribs with their cartilages, and the breastbone, and below by the diaphragm. It is generally spoken of as "the chest." It has been compared to a completely shut, conical box, the small end of which is turned upward, the back of the box being formed by the spinal column, the front by the breastbone, and the sides by the ribs.

The ribs are twenty-four in number, twelve on each side, and emerge from each side of the spinal column. The upper seven pairs are known as "true ribs," being fastened to the breastbone direct, while the lower five pairs are called (false ribs) or "floating ribs," because they are not so fastened, the upper two of them being fastened to the breastbone direct, while the lower five, having no cartilages, their forward ends being free.

The ribs are moved in respiration by two superficial muscular layers, known as the intercostal muscles. The diaphragm, the muscular partition before alluded to, separates the chest box from the abdominal cavity.

In the act of inhalation the muscles expand the lungs so that a vacuum is created and the air rushes in in accordance with the well known law of physics. Everything depends upon the muscles concerned in the process of respiration, which we may as, for convenience, term the "respiratory muscles." Without the aid of these muscles, the lungs cannot expand, and upon the proper use and control of these muscles, the Science of Breath largely depends. The proper control of these muscles will result in the ability to attain the maximum degree of lung expansion, and the greatest amount of the life giving properties of the air into the system.

The Yogis classify Respiration into four general methods, viz.:

- (1) High Breathing.
- (2) Mid Breathing.
- (3) Low Breathing.
- (4) Yogi Complete Breathing.

We will give a general idea of the first three methods, and a more extended treatment of the fourth method, upon which the Yogi Science of Breath is largely based.

High Breathing

This form of breathing is known to the Western world as Clavicular Breathing, or Collarbone Breathing. One breathing in this way elevates the ribs and raises the collarbone and shoulders, at the same time drawing in the abdomen and pushing its contents up against the diaphragm, which in turn is raised.

The upper part of the chest and lungs, which is the smallest, is used, and consequently but a minimum amount of air enters the lungs. In addition to this, with the diaphragm being raised, there can be no expansion in that direction. A study of the anatomy of the chest will convince any student that in this way a maximum amount of effort is used to obtain a minimum amount of benefit.

High Breathing is probably the worst form of breathing known to man and requires the greatest expenditure of energy with the smallest amount of benefit. It is an energy-wasting, poor-returns plan. It is quite common among the Western races, many women being addicted to it, and even singers, clergymen, lawyers and others, (trumpeters) who should know better, use it ignorantly.

Many diseases of the vocal organs and organs of respiration may be directly traced to this barbarous methods of breathing, and the straining of delicate organs caused by this method, often results in the harsh, disagreeable voices heard on all sides. Many persons who breath in this way become addicted to the disgusting practice of "mouth-breathing" described in a preceding chapter.¹

If the student has any doubts about what has been said regarding this form of breathing, let him try the experiment of expelling all the air from his/her lungs, then standing erect, with hands at sides, let him/her raise the shoulders and collarbone and inhale. He will find that the amount of air inhaled is far below normal. Then let him/her inhale a full breath, after dropping the shoulders and collarbone, and he/she will receive an object lesson in breathing which he/she will be apt to remember much longer than he/she would any words, printed or spoken.

Mid Breathing

This method of respiration is known to Western students as Rib Breathing, or Intercostal Breathing, and while less objectionable than High Breathing, is far inferior to either Low Breathing or to the Yogi Complete Breath. In Mid Breathing the diaphragm is pushed upward, and the abdomen drawn in. The ribs are raised somewhat, and the chest is partially expanded. It is quite common among men who have made no study of the subject. As there are two better methods known, we give it only passing notice, and that principally to call your attention to its shortcomings.

Low Breathing

This form of respiration is far better than either of the two preceding forms, and of recent years many Western writers have extolled its merits, and have exploited it under the names of "Abdominal Breathing," "Deep Breathing," "Diaphragmatic Breathing," etc., etc., and much good has been accomplished by the attention of the public having been directed to the subject, and many having been induced to substitute it for the inferior and injurious methods above alluded to. Many "systems of breathing" have been built around Low Breathing, and students have paid high prices to learn the new (?) systems. But, as we have said, much good has resulted, and after all the students who paid high prices to learn revamped old systems undoubtedly got their money's worth if they were induced to discard the old methods of High Breathing and Mid Breathing.

¹Of course, here he is speaking of people that breath through there mouths all the time. We as brass players must breath through the mouth to allow for the large quantities of air which must be taken in very rapidly. This is not possible through the nose.

Although many Western authorities write and speak of this method as the best known form of breathing, the Yogis know it to be but a part of a system which they have used for centuries and which they know as “The Complete Breath.” It must be admitted, however, that one must be acquainted with the principles of Low Breathing before he/she can grasp the idea of Complete Breathing.

Let us again consider the diaphragm. What is it? We have seen that it is the great partition muscle, which separates the chest and its contents from the abdomen and its contents. When at rest it presents a concave surface to the abdomen. That is, the diaphragm as viewed from the abdomen would seem like the sky as viewed from the earth—the interior of an arched surface. Consequently, the side of the diaphragm toward the chest organs is like a protruding rounded surface—like a hill. When the diaphragm is brought into use the hill formation is lowered and the diaphragm presses upon the abdominal organs and forces out the abdomen.

In Low Breathing, the lungs are given freer play than in the methods already mentioned, and consequently more air is inhaled. This fact has led the majority of Western writers to speak and write of Low Breathing (which they call Abdominal Breathing) as the highest and best method known to science. However, the Oriental Yogi has long known of a better method, and some few Western writers have recognized this fact. The trouble with all methods of breathing, other than “Yogi Complete Breathing,” is that in none of these methods do the lungs become filled with air—at the best only a portion of the lung space is filled, even in Low Breathing. High Breathing fills only the upper portion of the lungs. Mid Breathing fills only the middle and a portion of the upper parts. Low Breathing fills only the lower and middle parts. It is evident that any method that fills the entire lung space must be far preferable to those filling only certain parts. Any method, which will fill the entire lung space, must be of the greatest value to Man in the way of allowing him to absorb the greatest quantity of oxygen and to store away the greatest amount of prana². The Complete Breath is known to the Yogis to be the best method of respiration known to science.

The Yogi Complete Breath

Yogi Complete Breathing includes all the good points of High Breathing, Mid Breathing, and Low Breathing, with the objectionable features of each eliminated. It brings into play the entire respiratory apparatus, every part of the lungs, every air-cell, every respiratory muscle. The entire respiratory organism responds to this method of breathing, and the maximum amount of benefit is derived from the minimum expenditure of energy. The chest cavity is increased to its normal limits in all directions and every part of the machinery performs its natural work and functions.

One of the most important features of this method of breathing, is the fact that the respiratory muscles are fully called into play, whereas in the other forms of breathing only a portion of these muscles are so used. In Complete Breathing, among other muscles, those controlling the ribs are actively used, which increases the space in which the lungs may expand, and also gives the proper support to the organs when needed, Nature availing herself of the perfection of the principle of leverage in this process. Certain muscles hold the lower ribs firmly in position, while other muscles bend them outward.

Then again, in this method, the diaphragm is under perfect control and is able to perform its functions properly, and in such a manner as to yield the maximum degree of service.

In the rib-action, above alluded to, the lower ribs are controlled by the diaphragm which draws them slightly downward, while other muscles hold them in place and the intercostal muscles force them outward, which has the combined action of increasing the mid-chest cavity to its maximum. In addition to this muscular action, the upper ribs are also lifted and forced outward by the intercostal muscles, which increases the capacity of the upper chest to its fullest extent.

If you have studied the special features of the four given methods of breathing, you will at once see that the Complete Breath comprises all the advantageous features of the three other methods, plus the reciprocal advantages accruing from the combined action of the high-chest, mid-chest, and diaphragmatic regions, and the normal rhythm thus obtained.

²“Prana” is described as “the universal principle of energy or force, and that all energy or force is derived from that principle, or, rather, is a particular form of manifestation of that principle. Prana is that name by which we designate a universal principle, which principle is the essence of all motion, force or energy, whether manifested in gravitation, electricity, the revolution of the planets, and all forms of life, from the highest to the lowest. It may be called the soul of Force and Energy in all their forms, and the principle which, operating in a certain way, causes that form of activity which accompanies Life.”

How to Acquire the Yogi Complete Breath

The Yogi Complete Breath is the fundamental breath of the entire Yogi Science of Breath, and the student must fully acquaint himself/herself with it, and master it perfectly before he/she can hope to obtain results from the other forms of breath mentioned and given in this book. He/she should not be content with half learning it, but should go to work in earnest until it becomes his/her natural method of breathing. This will require work, time, and patience, but without these things, nothing is ever accomplished. There is no royal road to the Science of Breath, and the student must be prepared to practice and study in earnest if he/she expects to receive results.³ The results obtained by a complete mastery of the Science of Breath are great, and no one who has attained them would willingly go back to the old methods, and he will tell his friends that he considers himself amply repaid for all his work. We say these things now, that you may fully understand the necessity and importance of mastering this fundamental method of Yogi Breathing, instead of passing it by and trying some of the attractive looking variations given later on in this book.⁴ Again, we say to you: Start right, and right results will follow; but neglect your foundations and your entire building will topple over sooner or later.⁵

Perhaps the better way to teach you how to develop the Yogi Complete Breath, would be to give you simple directions regarding breath itself, and then follow up the same with general remarks concerning it, and then later on giving exercises for developing the chest, muscles and lungs which have been allowed to remain in an undeveloped condition by imperfect methods of breathing. Right here we wish to say that this Complete Breath is not a forced or abnormal thing, but on the contrary is a going back to first principles—a return to Nature. The healthy adult savage and the healthy infant of civilization both breathed in this manner, but civilized man has adopted unnatural methods of living, clothing, etc., and has lost his birthright. In addition, we wish to remind the reader that the Complete Breath does not necessarily call for the complete filling of the lungs at every inhalation. One may inhale the average amount of air, using the Complete Breathing Method and distributing the air inhaled, be the quantity large or small, to all parts of the lungs. However, one should inhale a series of full Complete Breaths several times a day, whenever opportunity offers, in order to keep the system in good order and condition.

The following simple exercise will give you a clear idea of what the Complete Breath is:

- (1) Stand or sit erect. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by bringing into play the diaphragm, which descending exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone, and chest. Then fill the higher portion of the lungs, protruding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs. In the final movement, the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in, which movement gives the lungs support and also helps to fill the highest part of the lungs.
At first reading, it may appear that this breath consists of three distinct movements. This, however, is not the correct idea. The inhalation is continuous, the entire chest cavity from the lowered diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collarbone, being expanded with a uniform movement. Avoid a jerky series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements, and will result in a uniform continuous breath. You will be able to complete the inhalation in a couple of seconds after a little practice.⁶
- (2) Retain the breath a few seconds.
- (3) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and drawing the abdomen in a little and lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs. When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen. A little practice will render this part of the exercise easy, and the movement once acquired will be afterward performed almost automatically.

³Obviously, this statement holds true for all exercises that are contained in this book. Progress is always gradual, and the student must remain mindful of this and not become discouraged if progress is at times slow or sporadic.

⁴Omitted in this compendium due to lack of space.

⁵Again, this statement is true for all aspects of brass playing as well. Do not neglect working on fundamentals such as those that are presented in this method book. They are the basis for all aspects of brass performance and must be given their proper due.

⁶As brass players, we must also practice this exercise while breathing through the mouth to become proficient at taking in large quantities of air very quickly. A variation of this exercise would be to practice it with the mouthpiece in place on the embouchure, striving to make the breaths complete and quick.

It will be seen that by this method of breathing all parts of the respiratory apparatus is brought into action, and all parts of the lungs, including the most remote air cells, are exercised. The chest cavity is expanded in all directions. You will also notice that the Complete Breath is really a combination of Low, Mid and High Breaths, succeeding each other rapidly in the order given, in such a manner as to form one uniform, continuous, complete breath.

You will find it quite a help to you if you will practice this breath before a large mirror, placing the hands lightly over the abdomen so that you may feel the movements. At the end of the inhalation, it is well to occasionally slightly elevate the shoulders, thus raising the collarbone and allowing the air to pass freely into the smaller upper lobe of the right lung, which is sometimes the breeding place of tuberculosis.

At the beginning of practice, you may have more or less trouble in acquiring the Complete Breath, but a little practice will make perfect, and when you have once acquired it, you will never willingly return to the old methods.

A Few Bits of Yogi Lore

We give below three forms of breath, quite popular among the Yogis. The first is the well known Yogi Cleansing Breath, to which is attributed much of the great lung endurance found among the Yogis. They usually finish up a breathing exercise with this Cleansing Breath, and we have followed this plan in this book. We also give the Yogi Nerve Vitalizing Exercise, which has been handed down among them for ages, and which has never been improved on by Western teachers of Physical Culture, although some of them have "borrowed" it from teachers of Yoga. We also give the Yogi Vocal Breath, which accounts largely for the melodious, vibrant voices of the better class of the Oriental Yogis. We feel that if this book contained nothing more than these three exercises, it would be invaluable to the Western student. Take these exercises as a gift from your Eastern brothers and put them into practice.

The Yogi Cleansing Breath

The Yogis have a favorite form of breathing which they practice when they feel the necessity of ventilating and cleansing the lungs. They conclude many of their other breathing exercises with this breath, and we have followed this practice in this book. This Cleansing Breath ventilates and cleanses the lungs, stimulates the cells and gives a general tone to the respiratory organs, and is conducive to their general healthy condition. Besides this effect, it is found to greatly refresh the entire system. Speakers, singers, (brass players) etc., will find this breath especially restful, after having tired the respiratory organs.

- (1) Inhale a Complete Breath.
- (2) Retain the air a few seconds.
- (3) Pucker up the lips as if for a whistle (but do not swell out the cheeks), then exhale a little air through the opening, with considerable vigor. Then stop for a moment, retaining the air, and then exhale a little more air. Repeat until the air is completely exhaled. Remember that considerable vigor is to be used in exhaling the air through the opening in the lips.

This breath will be found quite refreshing when one is tired and generally "used up." A trial will convince the student of its merits. This exercise should be practiced until it can be performed naturally and easily, as it is used to finish up a number of other exercises given in this book, and it should be thoroughly understood.

The Yogi Nerve Vitalizing Breath

This is an exercise well known to the Yogis, who consider it one of the strongest nerve stimulants and invigorants known to man. Its purpose is to stimulate the Nervous System, develop nerve force, energy and vitality. This exercise brings a stimulating pressure to bear on important nerve centers, which in turn stimulate and energize the entire nervous system, and send an increasing flow of nerve force to all parts of the body.

- (1) Stand erect.
- (2) Inhale a Complete Breath, and retain it.
- (3) Extend the arms straight in front of you, letting them be somewhat limp and relaxed, with only sufficient nerve force to hold them out.
- (4) Slowly draw the hands back toward the shoulders, gradually contracting the muscles and putting force into them, so that when they reach the shoulders the fists will be so tightly clenched that a tremulous motion is felt.

- (5) Then, keeping the muscles tense, push the fists slowly out, and then draw them back rapidly (still tense) several times.
- (6) Exhale vigorously through the mouth.
- (7) Practice the Cleansing Breath.

The efficiency of this exercise depends greatly upon the speed of the drawing back of the fists, and the tension of the muscles, and, of course, upon the full lungs. This exercise must be tried to be appreciated. It is without equal as a “bracer,” as our Western friends put it.

The Yogi Vocal Breath

The Yogis have a form of breathing to develop the voice. They are noted for their wonderful voices, which are strong, smooth, and clear, and have a wonderful trumpet-like carrying power. They have practiced this particular form of breathing exercise, which has resulted in rendering their voices soft, beautiful, and flexible, imparting to it that indescribable, peculiar-floating quality, combined with great power. The exercise given below will in time impart the above mentioned qualities, or the Yogi Voice, to the student who practices it faithfully. It is to be understood, of course, that this form of breath is to be used only as an occasional exercise, and not as a regular form of breathing.

- (1) Inhale a Complete Breath very slowly, but steadily, through the nostrils, taking as much time as possible in the inhalation.
- (2) Retain for a few seconds.
- (3) Expel the air vigorously in one great breath, through the wide opened mouth.
- (4) Rest the lungs by using the Cleansing Breath.

Without going deeply into the Yogi theories of sound-production in speaking and singing, we wish to say that experience has taught them that the timbre, quality, and power of a voice depends not alone upon the vocal organs of the throat, but that the facial muscles, etc., have much to do with the matter. Some men with large chests produce but a poor tone, while others with comparatively small chests produce tones of amazing strength and quality. Here is an interesting experiment worth trying: Stand before a mirror and pucker up your mouth and whistle, and note the general expression of your face. Then sing or speak as you do naturally, and see the difference. Then start to whistle again for a few seconds, and then, *without changing the position of your lips or face*, sing a few notes and notice what a vibrant, resonant, clear, and beautiful tone is produced.

The Seven Yogi Developing Exercises

The following are seven favorite exercises of the yogis for developing the lungs, muscles, ligaments, air cells, etc. They are quite simple, but marvelously effective. Do not let the simplicity of these exercises make you lose interest, for they are the result of careful experiments and practice on the part of the yogis, and are the essence of numerous intricate and complicated exercises, the non-essential portions being eliminated and the essential features retained.

The Retained Breath

This is a very important exercise, which tends to strengthen and develop the respiratory muscles as well as the lungs, and its frequent practice will also tend to expand the chest. The Yogis have found that an occasional holding of the breath, after the lungs have been filled with the Complete Breath, is very beneficial, not only to the respiratory organs but to the organs of nutrition, the nervous system, and the blood itself. They have found that an occasional holding of the breath tends to purify the air which has remained in the lungs from former inhalations, and to more fully oxygenate the blood. They also know that the breath so retained gathers up all the waste matter, and when the breath is expelled it carries with it the effete matter of the system, and cleanses the lungs just as a purgative does the bowels. The Yogis recommend this exercise for various disorders of the stomach, liver, and blood, and also find that it frequently relieves bad breath, which often arises from poorly ventilated lungs. We recommend students to pay considerable attention to this exercise, as it has great merits. The following directions will give you a clear idea of the exercise:

- (1) Stand erect.
- (2) Inhale a Complete Breath.
- (3) Retain the air as long as you can comfortably.
- (4) Exhale vigorously through the open mouth.
- (5) Practice the Cleansing Breath.

At first, you will be able to retain the breath only a short time, but a little practice will also show a great improvement. Time yourself with a watch if you want to note your progress.⁷

Lung Cell Stimulation

This exercise is designed to stimulate the air cells in the lungs, but beginners must not over do it, and in no case should it be indulged in to vigorously. Some may find a slight dizziness resulting from the first few trials, in which case let them walk around a little and discontinue the exercise for a while.

- (1) Stand erect, with hands at sides.
- (2) Breathe in very slowly and gradually.
- (3) While inhaling, gently tap the chest with the fingertips, constantly changing position.
- (4) When the lungs are filled, retain the breath and pat the chest with the palms of the hands.
- (5) Practice the Cleansing Breath.

This exercise is very bracing and stimulating to the whole body, and is a well known Yogi practice. Many of the air cells of the lungs become inactive by reason of incomplete breathing, and often become almost atrophied. One who has practiced imperfect breathing for years will find it not so easy to stimulate all these ill used air cells into activity all at once by the Complete Breath, but this exercise will do much toward bringing about the desired results, and is worth study and practice.

Rib Stretching

We have explained that the ribs are fastened by cartilages, which admit of considerable expansion. In proper breathing, the ribs play an important part, and it is well to occasionally give them a little special exercise in order to preserve their elasticity. Standing or sitting in unnatural positions, to which many of the Western people are addicted, is apt to render the ribs more or less stiff and inelastic, and this exercise will do much to overcome same.

- (1) Stand erect.
 - (2) Place the hands one on each side of the body, as high up under the armpits as convenient, the thumbs reaching toward the back, the palms on the side of the chest and the fingers to the front over the breast.
 - (3) Inhale the Complete Breath.
 - (4) Retain the air for a short time.
 - (5) Then gently squeeze the sides, at the same time slowly exhaling.
 - (6) Practice the Cleansing Breath.
- Use moderation in this exercise and do not overdo it.

Chest Expansion

The chest is quite apt to be contracted from bending over one's work, etc. This exercise is very good for the purpose of restoring natural conditions and gaining chest expansion.

- (1) Stand erect.
 - (2) Inhale a Complete Breath.
 - (3) Retain the air.
 - (4) Extend both arms forward and bring the two clenched fists together on a level with the shoulder.
 - (5) Then swing back the fists vigorously until the arms stand out straight sideways from the shoulders.
 - (6) Then bring back to Position 4, and swing to Position 5. Repeat several times.
 - (7) Exhale vigorously through the opened mouth.
 - (8) Practice the Cleansing Breath.
- Use moderation and do not overdo this exercise.

Walking Exercise

- (1) Walk with head up, chin drawn slightly in, shoulders back, and with a measured tread.

⁷Aside from the merits that the Yogi proclaims for this exercise, it should be obvious to the brass student that this is of benefit to him/her too. The ability to play long phrases is directly related to this study and the length of time that you are able to hold the air comfortably.

- (2) Inhale a Complete Breath, counting (mentally) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, one count to each step, making the inhalation extend over eight counts.
- (3) Exhale slowly through the nostrils, counting as before 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, one count to a step.
- (4) Rest between breaths, continue walking and counting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, one count to a step.
- (5) Repeat until you begin to feel tired. Then rest for a while, and resume at pleasure. Repeat several times a day.

Some Yogis vary this exercise by retaining the breath during a 1, 2, 3, 4, count, and then exhale in a eight step count. Practice whichever plan seems most agreeable to you.⁸

Morning Exercise

- (1) Stand erect in a military attitude, head up, eyes front, shoulders back, knees stiff, hands at sides.
- (2) Raise body slowly on toes, inhaling a Complete Breath, steadily and slowly.
- (3) Retain the breath for a few seconds, maintaining the same position.
- (4) Slowly sink to the first position, at the same time slowly exhaling the air through the nostrils.
- (5) Practice the Cleansing Breath.
- (6) Repeat several times, varying by using right leg alone, the left leg alone.

Stimulating Circulation

- (1) Stand erect.
- (2) Inhale a Complete Breath and retain.
- (3) Bend forward slightly and grasp a stick or cane steadily and firmly, and gradually exerting your entire strength upon the grasp.
- (4) Relax the grasp, return to first position, and slowly exhale.
- (5) Repeat several times.
- (6) Finish with the Cleansing Breath.

This exercise may be performed without the use of a stick or cane, by grasping an imaginary cane, using the will to exert pressure. The exercise is a favorite Yogi plan of stimulating the circulation by driving the arterial blood to the extremities, and drawing back the venous blood to the heart and lungs that it may take up the oxygen which has been inhaled with the air. In cases of poor circulation, there is not enough blood in the lungs to absorb the increased amount of oxygen inhaled, and the system does not get the full benefit of the improved breathing. In such cases, particularly, it is well to practice the exercise, occasionally with the regular Complete Breathing exercise.

Muscle Tension Release Exercises for Brass Players

1. Standing erect, toes together, heels slightly apart, spine reaching upward, inhale a deep breath through your nose, filling the lungs from bottom to top. As you exhale slowly through your nose, lightly tense all the muscle below your neck. When all the air has been expelled, release the tension, breathe and relax for a few seconds. Repeat the process, taking in more air and tensing more tightly this time as you exhale. Relax again. Repeat the process a third time, filling the lungs completely by lifting the sternum and expanding the rib cage. Now tense all the muscles below the neck as tightly as possible as you exhale. When all the air is out, release the tension, spread the feet slightly apart, close your eyes, and relax, breathing deeply.
2. Standing erect, feet slightly apart, raise the arms to shoulder height, stretching them to their maximum length (even stretch the fingers). Keep the arms out but relax the stretch. Inhale, squeezing the shoulder blades together, expanding the rib cage at the same time. Exhale, stretching the arms and fingers out again. Continue squeezing and stretching at your normal breathing rate until your arms become tired, then slowly lower them, still stretching through the finger tips. When they are almost completely down, release the tension and let them fall to your side.
3. Laying on your back on a carpeted floor, pull your knees to your chest, holding them with your arms. Inhale a deep breath through your nose. Exhale and gently roll toward the right without tipping over. Inhale, coming back to the center. Exhale, rolling to the left. Continue the exercise at your normal rate of breathing. Different

⁸This exercise can be modified further by standing or sitting with your horn in playing position. Vary the tempo of the counting, and vary the number of counts as well. Do not let the breaths become uneven though, keep them smooth and consistent. Care must be taken if practicing this exercise in 1 or 2 counts as you may become dizzy quite quickly.

muscles can be massaged by either raising your head or changing the position of your legs before you begin rolling from side to side.

4. Chest Expanding Breath – Standing erect, toes together, heels slightly apart, spine reaching upward, raise your arms in front of you to shoulder height, palms facing each other. Inhale, raising your arms slowly over your head, letting your head follow the path of your hands as they rise above it. Let the arms continue their circular path, exhaling as they descend. When they reach the bottom, inhale and start the circle again, synchronizing the speed of the circles with the speed of your breathing.