

Bill Adam - Trumpet Teacher

Some guiding principles behind the Adam routine according to Pat Harbison

1. The imagination is the driving force behind music making. Hearing the desired result vividly in your imagination will activate whatever physical activity it takes to make that sound.
2. Every day and every repetition causes a more dependable result. Inconsistency eventually vanishes as the body makes a habit out of the most efficient way it finds to get the imagined result.
3. Most physical problems are air problems. When the air and the imagination are working, the embouchure, tongue, etc. can settle into balance. If the air never flows steadily the rest of your system will also be in a constant state of adjustment and compensation.
4. Physical and psychological tension are the trumpeter's greatest foes.
5. A trumpet player needs to be involved with every note they play in an energetic way-both physically and mentally. It takes a lot of energy to play well. It shouldn't take a lot of force. If it does you are fighting against yourself and/or the instrument.
6. We don't want our body to fight the physics and acoustics of the trumpet. Those natural laws don't change. Therefore, we have to change our approach.
7. Unnecessary tension comes when the body is working against itself. Isometric tension is created by opposing muscle groups which are at war.
8. Start the day by playing on the leadpipe/mouthpiece combination. Use plenty of air and try to get the most steady and resonant sound you can. On most Bb trumpets the concert Eb is the natural resonant pitch of the leadpipe.
9. After you have set up the air flow and warmed up the embouchure (without creating undue embouchure tension), transfer that approach to the trumpet.
10. Start with long tones or slowly moving flow studies with smaller intervals. Every single thing you play all day is a tone study!
11. Establish a relaxed but energized airflow and a rich, resonant tone on every note from the very first note.
12. Start in the middle register and gradually expand up and down alternating higher/lower/higher/lower, etc.
13. Carry the beauty of sound and the free flow of energized breath into all the other contexts: expand register, expand dynamics, go through all the various articulations, lyrical playing, etc.
14. At all times remember to imagine a beautiful sound. Keep your attention on that sound. Keep your energy up but never tense. Move that energized air through your sound. Stay calm and mentally focused...never anxious.
15. Never get angry with yourself and never try to go so fast that anxiety is created. If you do those things you are actually practicing being anxious and upset when playing. Of course that is how you will feel emotionally when you play if that is how you have practiced. Relax. It is supposed to be fun. We don't work music. We play music.