

13 Essential
Exercises for
Trombone
Mastery



THE AVITSUR METHOD

for the Advanced Trombonist

Haim Avitsur

Dear fellow trombonist,

Congratulations on your purchase of *The Avitsur Method – 13 Essential Exercises to Trombone Mastery*. This is the only book of its kind, concentrating on exercises that use a metronome and a tuner. I call it “the Avitsur Method” not only because it is part of my teaching method, but also because these are the exercises I played as a student and continue to play every day.

In order for you to gain as much as possible from this book, take a few moments to read these introductory notes. Follow the instructions carefully to make efficient use of your practice time.

In *The Avitsur Method* you will find exercises that will encourage you to develop as a player and a musician. Your confidence will build and your skills will improve; you will be in your best shape. Practice these exercises daily. As your technique and musicianship improves, you will grow to think of this book as a daily “system check”.

The exercises in this book are divided into five groups:

- A. Sound development – exercises 1-3 (intonation & air supply)
- B. High register – exercises 3 and 5-8
- C. Lip flexibility – exercises 4-5
- D. Staccato (single tongue), double and triple – exercises 8-12
- E. Trills – exercises 13-14

You can play through the book every day or choose which daily exercises are right for you.

DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME – If you are not going to use a metronome and a tuner in your practice, you will not achieve the full benefits this book has for you!

When working with this book remember:

Warm-up is the time to get ready to play, which could be anywhere from 30 seconds to 5 minutes.

Routine is the time a player puts aside every day, or a few times a week, to do exercises that help maintain a high level of playing. Your routine might take more than 45 minutes a day.

Yours truly,

Haim Avitsur

P.S. I would love to hear about your progress and success. Please visit my website HaimAvitsur.com and drop me an email: Haim.Avitsur@gmail.com.

Exercise #1

Intonation & Air Supply

PREVIEW: This exercise will develop both your intonation and air supply. By playing this exercise, your soft dynamic range and the ability to hold more air in your lungs will become second nature.

To make the most out of this exercise you **must** do the following:

1. Use a metronome at 60-66 clicks per minute. (A slower tempo yields better results.)
2. Use a tuner - the needle on your tuner must remain stationary from the moment you start playing the note.
3. Your dynamic should be ***p*** throughout the exercise.
4. Breathe deeply but never in the middle of a slur.

Exercise 1

Intonation & Air Supply

• = 60 - 66

p

13

25

37

49

61 VI

73 VII

85

Exercise #2

The purpose of this exercise is to develop airflow and lung capacity, as well as better intonation. You must use your metronome and your tuner to make the most of this exercise.

While playing make sure to:

1. Breathe deeply, but never in the middle of a slur.
2. Hold the last note at least 8 metronome clicks (or longer, if possible).
3. Work with a tuner and see that the needle remains stationary.

Your dynamic should be *mf* throughout the exercise.

Exercise 2

Airflow, Air Capacity, and Intonation

$\bullet = 60 - 69$

mf

5

9

13

17

21

25

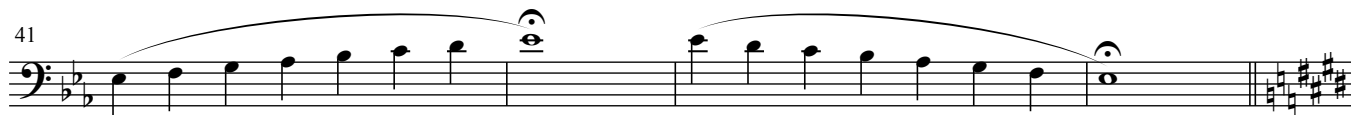
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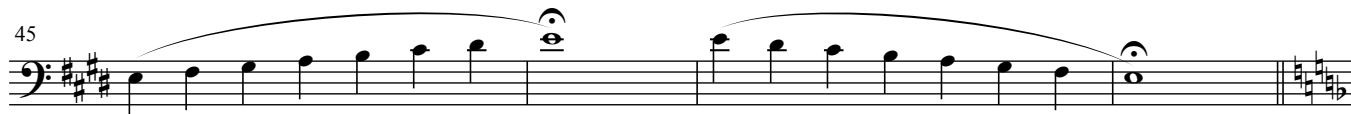
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The image displays a musical exercise for the bass clef, consisting of ten staves. Each staff begins with a measure number (5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37) and a key signature. The first staff is in F major (one flat) and includes a tempo marking of 60-69 bpm and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The subsequent staves change key signatures: Staff 2 is in D major (two sharps), Staff 3 is in D minor (two sharps), Staff 4 is in B-flat major (two flats), Staff 5 is in B major (two sharps), Staff 6 is in B-flat major (two flats), Staff 7 is in G major (one sharp), Staff 8 is in G minor (one sharp), Staff 9 is in E-flat major (three flats), and Staff 10 is in E major (one sharp). Each staff contains a melodic line with slurs and accents, and a final measure with a double bar line and a key signature change.

41



45



49



Exercise #3

The instructions for this exercise are similar to the instructions for exercise #2. This exercise will help you build a strong high register and increase lung capacity.

While playing make sure to:

1. Breathe deeply, but never in the middle of a slur.
2. Hold the last note at least 8 metronome clicks (or longer, if possible).
3. Work with a tuner - see that the needle remains stationary while playing the last long note of each scale.

Your dynamic should be *mf* throughout the exercise.

Exercise 3

High Register and Air Capacity

$\bullet = 92$

mf

3

5

7

9

11

13

15

17

19

Exercise #4

This is the first of three exercises that will develop your natural legato.

You should always play this exercise with a metronome. Keep a steady beat at all times and use the marked positions.

Exercise 4

Natural Legato

Use all seven positions in the same sequence.

• = 92

mf

I

7 II

13 III

19 IV

25 V

31 VI

37 VII

I = 1st position; II - 2nd position; III = 3rd position; etc.

Exercise #5

This exercise has four sections (A, B, C, & D), each more advanced than the one before.

As you start play this exercise, you may notice your playing is a little bumpy. Strive to develop a smooth legato throughout. Using your natural legato will help build a strong high register.

Use the marked positions. Sometimes you will find it easier to start with the VI position and work your way up to I position.

Use your metronome while playing this exercise. A slower tempo will force you to use more air while playing the exercise.

When you feel comfortable with **Exercise #5**, continue to play **Exercise #5a** and hold the high note for a minimum of 4 metronome clicks.

Work with a tuner so that the needle remains stationary while playing the last long note.

Exercise 5

High Register

A

♩ = 80 - 96

Musical notation for section A, measures 1-6. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The measures are grouped into six phrases, each labeled with a Roman numeral: I, II, III, IV, V, and VI. Each phrase consists of a series of eighth notes, with the final note of each phrase being a half note. The phrases are connected by slurs. The final measure of section A is marked with the instruction "and back to I".

B

Musical notation for section B, measures 7-12. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The measures are grouped into six phrases, each labeled with a Roman numeral: I, II, II, IV, V, and VI. Each phrase consists of a series of eighth notes, with the final note of each phrase being a half note. The phrases are connected by slurs. The final measure of section B is marked with the instruction "and back to I".

C

Musical notation for section C, measures 13-18. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The measures are grouped into six phrases, each labeled with a Roman numeral: I, II, III, IV, V, and VI. Each phrase consists of a series of eighth notes, with the final note of each phrase being a half note. The phrases are connected by slurs. The final measure of section C is marked with the instruction "and back to I".

D

Musical score for exercise D, measures 19-23. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff (measures 19-20) is marked *mf* and contains two phrases labeled I and II. The second staff (measures 21-22) contains two phrases labeled III and IV. The third staff (measures 23) contains two phrases labeled V and VI, with the instruction "and back to I" at the end.

5a

Musical score for exercise 5a, measures 25-28. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff (measures 25-27) is marked *mf* and contains three phrases labeled I, II, and III. The second staff (measures 28) contains three phrases labeled IV, V, and VI, with the instruction "and back to I" at the end.

5b

Musical score for exercise 5b, measures 31-34. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff (measures 31-33) is marked *mf* and contains three phrases labeled I, II, and III. The second staff (measures 34) contains three phrases labeled IV, V, and VI, with the instruction "and back to I" at the end.

Exercise #6

Note: ALTO CLEF!!!! 

From bar #8 use marked positions.

Exercise #7

Each scale has two sections (A & B). Play each as written without speeding up or slowing down.

Breathe after every two bars only. Inhale as deeply as you can and try to use all of your air before your next breath.

This is a single tongue exercise; do not use double tongue.

Exercise 7

Staccato

$\bullet = 92 - 100$
A

f

4 B.

8

11 A.

15 B.

19

22 A.

26 B.

30

34 A.

38

B.

41

44

A.

47

50

B.

53

56

A.

59

62

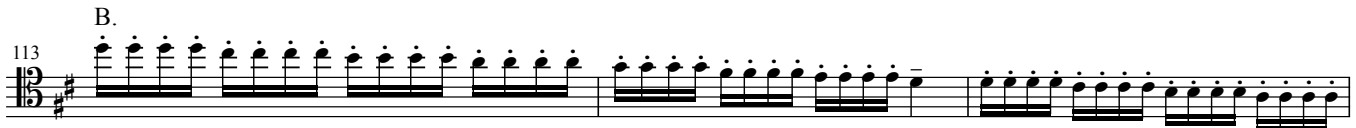
B.

65

68

107  A.

110 

B. 

116 

120 

Exercise #8 through #11

Inhale deeply and quickly whenever you need air, but only at the end of a bar.

Use your air to support the notes. If you feel you are pressing the mouthpiece to your teeth, rest for a moment and then continue from the same spot.

Pay close attention to your timing with the metronome. If you slow down or get behind the beat, stop playing for a moment and then continue from the same spot to the end of the exercise. If you lag behind the beat a second time, again, stop for a moment and then continue again from the same spot.

You will have mastered this exercise only when you are able to play it from start to finish, at a faster than recommended tempo without losing any of the notes.

Exercise 8

Triple Staccato

♩ = 80 - 100

Use: ta ka ta ka ta ka ta
or: ta ta ka ta ta ka ta

f *sim.*

7

13

20

26

Exercise 9

Triple Staccato

♩ = 80 - 100

Use the same articulations as in Exercise 9

f

sim.

4

7

10

13

16

19

22

25

28

31

Exercise 10

Double Staccato

$\bullet = 132 - 160$

f

sim.

7

14

21

28

Exercise 11

Double Staccato

♩ = 132 - 160

f

4 *sim.*

7

10

13

17

21

25

29

Exercise #12 and #13

The trill exercises are self-explanatory. If you play with your metronome and use all recommended positions they will become second nature.

Exercise 12

Trills

Use a metronome and the marked positions.

$\bullet = 60 - 72$

1
VII
VII
VII
VII

3 3 3 3

9
VII
VII
VII

6 6 6 6

14
III
VI
VI
VI
VI

3 3 3 3

22
VI
VI
VI
VI

6 6 6 6

27
II
V
V
V
V

3 3 3 3

35
V
V
V
V

6 6 6 6

40
I
IV
IV
IV
IV

3 3 3 3

48
IV
IV
IV
IV

6 6 6 6

53
III
V
V
V
V

3 3 3 3

Exercise 13

Trills

Use a metronome and the marked positions.
The grace notes should come **before** the beat.

♩ = 60 - 72

VII

7 VI

13 V

Use both

19 VI

25 V

31 IV

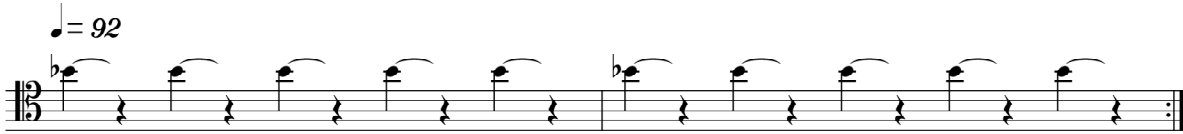
37 III

43 II

49 I

Appendix

Play the following 10 times



Think of this B-flat musical passage as if it is the beginning of the Ravel *Bolero* solo.

Note there are 10 notes in the passage above, to be repeated 10 times. Thus, you will play this B-flat 100 times. Before each repeat, stop for 8 seconds and fill in the following form:

No. of B-flats missed out of:	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
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For instance, if you missed 1 note during the first round of 10 notes, 0 notes during the second repeat, and 2 during the third repeat, your table should look as follows:

No. of B-flats missed out of:	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
	1	0	2							

When you are done playing your 100 B-flats, you will know your percentage of missed notes when you need to play a passage such as Ravel's *Bolero*.

Let's consider this following example of a completed chart:

No. of B-flats missed out of:	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

This indicates playing 96% of the B-flats correctly. You could also say that there is a 4% chance you will miss that same B-flat.

Move on to the high C (as in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*), D-flat (Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*), then D (Brahms's *Symphony No. 2*), and finally E-flat (Berg's *Three Orchestra Pieces*).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

HAIM AVITSUR has premiered almost 60 new pieces encompassing a broad range of styles from solo trombone to chamber music and orchestra. He has worked with composers such as Joan Tower and Leo Kraft, as well as with composer's organizations such as the New York Composers Circle. Mr. Avitsur has worked with composition students in seminars and short-term residencies in schools such as the University of Virginia and Stanford University.

Currently Haim Avitsur is on the faculty of the University of Virginia, and he is the principal trombonist of the Charlottesville Symphony Orchestra. He is also on the faculty at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College in New York. In 2005 he founded Trio Hidas, with Nitzan Haroz, principal trombonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and David Taylor, bass trombone soloist. Trio Hidas is the Ensemble in Residence of the Summer Trombone Workshop, of which Mr. Avitsur is the founder and artistic director. In 2007, the Summer Trombone Workshop will go international with a second residence in Taiwan.

Haim Avitsur was the only trombonist named a 2005 Emerging Artist by Symphony Magazine. His recent solo CD recording, Sonatas for Trombone and Piano by David Loeb, is available on the Vienna Modern Masters Label. Mr. Avitsur will solo with the Western Piedmont Symphony Orchestra in February 2007.

Mr. Avitsur is a clinician of the Edwards Instrument Company.