Basic Equipment

Recommended Equipment/Sizes

Important measurements for the trombone are the:
- bore size (the diameter of the tubing) and the
- shank size (the width of the opening for the mouthpiece-large or small)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Uses</th>
<th>Bore Size</th>
<th>Shank Size</th>
<th>&quot;F&quot; Attachment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginner (6th-8th grade) &amp; High School Marching Band</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead or 2nd in Jazz Band</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Level (8th-12th)</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Maybe -- not necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd or 4th in the Jazz Band</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Maybe -- not necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Level (10th -Prof.)</td>
<td>.547</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Trombone in Orchestra, Band or Jazz Band -- Advanced Level</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes -- Comes with 2 attachments. Usually F and D/Eb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument Recommendations

**Beginner Trombones**
- Yamaha YSL-354
- Bach TB 200
- Bundy 1523
- Conn USA
- Getzen 351

**Professional Small-Bore Trombones**
- Yamaha YSL-691, YSL-695
- Bach 12, 16, 16M
- Conn 6H, 100H
- King 2102, 2103
**Medium-Bore Trombones**
- Bach 36, 36B
- Yamaha YSL-683, 684, 684-
- Yamaha YSL – 645, 646
- Conn 7H, 78H

**Large-Bore Trombones**
- Bach 42, 42B
- YSL-8820 Xeno
- Conn 8H, 88H
- Benge 190, 190F

**Bass Trombones**
- Bach 50B (50B2) 50B3
- Yamaha YBL-613, YBL-622
- Conn 110H, (112H)
- Getzen 1052 FD, 1062 FD

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**F-Attachment does not = a bass trombone!**

* The F-attachment adds extra tubing to the tenor trombone, allowing it to play lower.
* Pressing the trigger puts the harmonic series of the trombone into F, (rather than Bb)
* Its secondary function is for the convenience of having alternate positions in the low register
* It adds 4 notes to the low register to help bridge a gap between low E and pedal Bb. (The low B is attainable if practiced by "lipping" down).
Mouthpieces

Mouthpiece Recommendations

Beginner
- Bach 12C, 11C, 7C
- Schilke 47, 48, 49

*Intermediate
- Bach 7C, 6½ AL
- Schilke 50

Advanced
- Bach 6½ AL, 5G, 5GS
- Schilke 51, 51B, 51D, 52D, 52E2

Bass Trombone
- Bach 1G, 1½G, 2G, 3G
- Schilke 57, 58, 59, 60

Mouthpieces be physically comfortable, and should still seem so after hours of playing. This means it should be the right size and shape to the face of the player and should be able to accommodate the embouchure adjustments needed to cover a player's full range of notes, articulation, and dynamics.

It should be consistently playable. That is, it should allow the trombonist to play across his or her entire range with a relatively uniform effort (and not too much of one), without a tendency to wander off the pitch at any portion of the player's range, during changes in dynamics, tone coloration, etc.

It should be matched to the horn and the music. That is, the acoustical characteristics and response of the mouthpiece should complement those of the trombone it is being used with, and the combination should in turn be appropriate for the job at hand, whether it be studio work, a concert hall performance, lead trombone in a jazz group, out in the field in a marching band, or whatever.
Holding the Trombone

Left-hand Position
The left hand holds the entire weight of the instrument. Consequently, it is very important to develop a proper, yet comfortable, holding position.

Right-hand Position
The right hand moves the slide. None of the instruments weight should be allowed to shift to the right hand. If the weight is in the right hand, the instrument will move too much and the player may develop embouchure problems.
Lubricating the Slide

Slide Cream (should NOT to be confused with slide grease!) – There are several different varieties of these products out there that provide excellent lubrication:

- Trombotine
- Slide-O-Mix
- Conn Formula 3
- Cold Cream & Water

They all work well if the directions are followed. Possibly the cheapest and most efficient lubricant is standard, non-scented cold cream from the cosmetics department at your favorite store. The less “extra stuff” in it the better!

Here is a method for applying and using:

1. The slide MUST be clean!

2. Once the slide is clean and dry apply a SMALL amount of the cream with your fingers directly to the stockings (ends) of the inner slide tubes. Rub the cream all over the stockings and remove any excess. The key here is to use SMALL amounts! You want a very thin layer of the cream on the stockings.

3. Place the inner tubes in to the outer tubes and work the slide back and forth over the entire length of the slide several times.

4. Remove the inner tubes and wipe off the cream from the stockings with a soft, dry cloth.

5. Place the inner tubes in to the outer tubes again and work the slide back and forth several times.

6. Again remove the inner tubes and look at the stockings – if there is a substantial about of cream remaining repeat steps 4 and 5.

7. Using a small spray bottle with clean water lightly spray the stockings and reinsert them in to the outer tubes.

8. Again work the slide back and forth several times.

Your slide should now move very freely and quickly! There will be no need to clean and re-apply the cream for up to 2-3 weeks. Water should be sprayed on the stockings whenever the instrument is played initially and every 20-30 minutes afterward depending on how much it is being played. If there are still some areas where the slide is slow or hanging this could indicate a dent, bend, alignment issue or that the slide needs to be chemically cleaned.
Cleaning the Trombone

Caution: Do not use any soaps or chemicals when cleaning the instrument.

1. Clean the trombone in two parts, the bell section and the slide section.
2. Use only very mild warm water (not cold and absolutely never too warm). Water that is too warm will remove the lacquer from the instrument.
3. A snake cleaning brush is needed for cleaning the slide section.
4. Begin by allowing the bathtub faucet to enter the bell section and flow out the connection tube. The water should be allowed to rinse through this section for a few minutes.
5. Dry off the outside of the bell section and remove main tuning slide.
6. Clean and apply tuning slide grease to the interior slide parts that are in contact with the main body of the bell section. One of the interior slide parts may be on the bell section. Be sure to wipe off any excess tuning slide grease after the tuning slide is reinstalled and closed completely.
7. The main tuning slide can be difficult to reinstall on the bell section. Due care in replacing this slide is very important to prevent damage to this part of the instrument. Most tuning slides have one end that attaches just before the other. The tuning slide is pressure sensitive when it is first connected. This slide cannot be forced onto the bell section.
8. Put the bell section back in the case and remove the slide section.
9. Use the faucet on the bathtub with the same water temperature as above. Allow the slide section to fill with water. Both slides will fill with water.
10. Operatethe slides over the tub with the water inside the slides. This will help the slides clean itself. Pour the water out of the slides and remove the outer slide.
11. Be careful where you place all slides. Do not set them on the floor where they can be accidentally stepped on.
12. Allow water to run and flow through the outer slide for a few minutes. Pour all water out of the slide.
13. Refill the outer slide with water. Run a snake cleaning brush in both slides (water should be in the slides). Pour out the water in the outer slide and rinse water through the slide one more time.
14. Set the outer slide down in a safe place.
15. Rinse water through each of the inner slides. Use the snake cleaning brush through each slide and rinse water again through each slide.
16. Dry all inner and outer slides with a soft towel.
17. Put the slide section back together and reapply preferred slide lubricant.
18. The last step is to clean the mouthpiece. A mouthpiece brush is very useful to clean the shank of the mouthpiece.
19. Slide cream lubrication should only be applied to the two inner stockings at the end of the slides. The slide cream will coat the inside of the outer slide. Excess cream should be wiped off the stockings of the inner slides.
Posture

BASIC POSTURE CONCEPTS

• **BE TALL** whether sitting or standing
  o keep the head up
  o resting in the back of the chair is counterproductive
  o keep the spine perpendicular to the floor

• **BRING THE INSTRUMENT UP TO PERFORMER**, not the performer to the instrument

• **KEEP BOTH FEET ON THE FLOOR**, as when standing

Setting students up for Success

Make sure that trombone students have enough room around them - front, back, and side to side

Each student should have his or her own music stand in order to hold the instrument properly while reading the music and watching the director.
Breathing/Breath Support

- This is one of the most important aspects of performing on any brass instrument.
- "Sustain the beautiful music from below the rib cage with no conscious muscle involvement on the intake or the blow." (Buddy Baker)
- Student should sit gently tall (relaxed). The spine should be straight. (Do not curve the lower back.)
- **Intake**
  Think the syllable "HAW" on the inhale.
  Air should fill the lower abdominal muscles first (below the belt line) -- then to the middle -- finally to the upper chest.
  There should be no gasping or wheezing sounds. Stay relaxed.
- **Exhale**
  Use the syllable "POO" (after the embouchure is set, use "TOO").
  Support the sound. Use the air first from the lower abdominal muscles -- then the middle -- and finally the upper (if needed.)
  The inhale and exhale should be one continuous smooth, relaxed motion.
  There should be a visible movement of the lower abdomen during this process.

Embouchure Formation

- Use the student's natural lip formation, a natural "facial mask."
- Bring the jaw forward slightly.
- Upper lips and cheeks "gently hug" the teeth and gums so air can come through the center of the lips ONLY -- no air puffs. (Buddy Baker)
- Flat chin.
- Wet or dry embouchure -- personal preference
- Teeth slightly apart.
- Use "POO" so that the lips are slightly pursed.
- Gently firm corners (not pulled back, i.e. smiling)
- Most relaxed part of embouchure is the aperture (the center of the lips)

Combining Breathing and Breath Support and Embouchure

- Use the syllable "TOO."
- Hold a piece of paper in front of the air stream for a visual reinforcement.
- Watch for "smiling", puffed cheeks, bad habits, etc.

Mouthpiece Placement

- Hold the mouthpiece by the shank with two fingers and a thumb.
- The mouthpiece should be positioned with more of it on the upper lip than the lower.
- The vertical placement is more important than the horizontal. (Some players perform off center because of dental structure.)
- Practice placing the mouthpiece.
In Tune – In Tone
Producing a good tone

Intonation

Tuning the Main Tuning Slide
- Tune the main tuning slide on all trombones to top of the staff Bb. The trombone is pitched in concert pitch (Bb=Bb), however it is called trombone in Bb.
- F-attachments should be tuned to fourth line F, thus allowing the bottom of the staff F (an octave lower) to be in tune in first position.
- Bass trombonists should tune their main tuning slide and their F attachments as above. The D or Eb attachment should be tuned to the middle of the staff D or Eb in first position respectively.

Slide Positions
- The trombone can play perfectly in tune or atrociously out of tune depending on the knowledge and attention given to slide positions.

Overtone Series’
The overtone series creates certain intonation tendencies that the teacher and player should be aware to improve intonation.
Slide Positions are NOT Equidistant!

Alternate Positions

- Alternate positions should be taught early so that players don't cling to familiar positions.
- The more notes played with the slide going in one direction, the better.
- Half steps should be played with adjacent positions whenever possible.
- Alternate positions have a slightly inferior quality of sound and should not be used for "prominent" notes.
- **Teach at least 3 alternate positions to your trombone players** and encourage them to use them!
  - 4th line "F" in 6th
  - "D" above middle "C" in long 4th
  - Top of the staff "Bb" in short 5th

Articulation

Placement of the Tongue
The placement of the tongue actually changes throughout the range of the instrument. It is probably not necessary to point this out to students, because most make this adjustment naturally. For that reason, I teach "TOO" and "DOO" respectively for Staccato and Legato tonguing.

**Staccato**
- TOO (middle range)
- TAH (low range)
- TI -- *i as in it* (high range)

**Legato** - *use a soft "D"
- DOO (middle range)
- DAH (low range)
- DI -- *i as in it* (high range)
Slurring

The trombone is the only wind instrument without a true slur. A light tongue must be used to separate the air flow for the slide to move. If the tongue is too hard, slurring will not occur. If the tongue is too soft, glissandos may occur.

Syllables for Slurring:
DOO (middle range)
DAH (lower range)
DI -- I as in it (upper range)

The slide action must be quicker between slide positions since there is less time between tones.
Breath support!

Slurring on the Trombone:
Other Techniques to Try:

• Sing – Buzz – Play - The key is to buzz glissando, with no tongue after the first note. Try using a BERP or Brass Buzzer so the students can also use the slide.

• Wind Patterning - Blow air against your hand, and tongue the rhythm. Feel the student’s air, and have them feel yours. Do they feel the difference?

• Paper on Wall - Blow air to keep a paper against the wall. Play a piece of music, and then tongue the rhythm while keeping the paper on the wall. Return to the music and evaluate any change.

Warm- Ups/ Technique Builders

Buzzing
Long Tones
Lip Slurs
Articulation
Slide Technique
Scales/Arpeggios, etc

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Warming up on your trombone is an important part of your musical day. Playing a brass instrument is much like a sport - you wouldn't go out an run a mile with no warm-up. You would need to wake up your muscles, and get them ready to run that mile. Your lips are made up of many muscles which help you to play trombone, and it's necessary that you warm them up every day. The following is a warm-up that will help you get ready to play the trombone. Good luck, and have fun.

Mouthpiece Buzzing
Buzz up and down in the middle of your range for no more than 5 minutes.

Long Tones
Play these with your best tone and warm, relaxed breaths.

Lip Slurs
Lip slurs should be played cleanly with no tonguing except for the first note in each position

1. 

2. 

3. 

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These exercises should be played with no tongue except for the first note of slur. Remember to keep the air moving at all times. In exercises A-D, make each slur after the initial lip slur sound as clean as that first one. Exercises E & F expand the range up to a twelfth. If you find that too easy, keep going as long as you (a) can produce a good sound and (b) can produce good slurs. For a good legato slur remember to move the slide quickly at the last moment. Be sure to try transposing these exercises to different keys as well. Work with your teacher to produce a beautiful, liquid trombone legato.
Figure 8–11 Warm-up Exercises

Long Tones

Long Slurs

Tonguing

These are only examples of the types of exercises that should be practiced. Expansion of range, dynamic control, and other aspects of technique can be accomplished by extending these basic studies as control allows.