

TONE 3 SAX – EMOUCHURE EXERCISES 1

The following exercises will help in relaxing your embouchure and improving your breathing.

1. SETTING THE MOUTH

The way we put our mouthpiece in our mouth and blow air shapes the quality of our sound.

- Stand in front of a mirror with your sax. Relax your body. Open your mouth and leave it in a relaxed and open position. Relax any muscles that seem tight or tense.
- Swing your mouthpiece into your relaxed mouth and close your mouth around it. Don't tense your lips or jaw, just close your mouth and leave it in a relaxed position. Check for any tension in the mirror.
- Breathe 'warm air' through the mouthpiece but not enough to make a sound. You should be pushing from your lungs and your abdominal muscles should be tense. But your lips/jaw must remain in the same relaxed position. Take note of any tension in your face and relax those muscles.
- Increase your breathing and bring your jaw up to put a little pressure on the reed. Do this gradually and as soon as a sound is produced apply no more jaw pressure. Watch your mouth closely to avoid any unnecessary tension in your lips or cheeks. You will need a little tension to avoid the air escaping your lips but only enough for that purpose. Avoid pulling the edges of your mouth up and back in a kind of forced smile. If you do this you are using your lips to apply pressure on the reed, not your jaw.

You should now be producing a good sound with minimal tension in your mouth. Try to play scales or other exercises while maintaining this embouchure position until it feels natural. If you have difficulty producing a clear sound always focus on pushing more air.

2. WARM/COLD AIR

- Hold a long note.
- Imagine you are blowing out a candle on the other side of the room. Your throat will take a narrow shape. This is blowing *cold air*.
- Imagine you are fogging up a whole window with a single breath on a cold morning. Your mouth will take a wide open shape. This is blowing *warm air*.
- Practise going between these two different mouth shapes as you hold your note. Both are used in different kinds of music but the *warm air* shape applies to most kinds of music you will play.
- Play a piece with the *warm air* mouth shape.