

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone

Written Instructional Outline 2

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Objectives

- Instruct how to open the case.
- Instruct how to safely remove instrument parts and how to safely assemble the saxophone. Include incorrect and correct examples.
- Instruct use of neck strap including proper placement and alignment. Instruct body posture, hand posture, how to hold, & how to angle the saxophone. Include incorrect and correct examples.
- Instruct how to finger the note B (third line on the staff). Include incorrect and correct examples.
- Review air, embouchure, and articulation. Play the note B with articulation exercises. Include incorrect and correct examples.

Sequence of Instruction:

Gathering materials

Students will need the following materials:

- Chair
- Saxophonet Case (w/ saxophone)
- Saxophone Reed
- Piece of paper

Teacher: We will cover musician posture, how to use our air as a wind musician, how to open our saxophone case, how to care for our reeds, and how to assemble one part of our saxophone in today's lesson.

T: For today's lesson, all you will need is a chair to sit in, your saxophone in its case, some reeds and yourself.

(Students, ensure they have all said items.)

T: Once you've made sure you've had these items, go ahead and set your saxophone in it's case to the side for right now.

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Review:

Musician Posture

T: If you've seen a band, orchestra, or other group of musicians play, which way have you seen them sit and play their instruments? Like the picture on the left or the right?



(Left, junior high band performing in a gymnasium)



(Right, a person slouched in an office chair using an iPad)

(Await **Student** response)

T: Hopefully, when you've seen musicians play, you see them sit like the picture on the left.

T: The first step to being a musician begins with how we sit.

T: For each step of our musician posture, take your time. Our posture begins with where and how we sit.

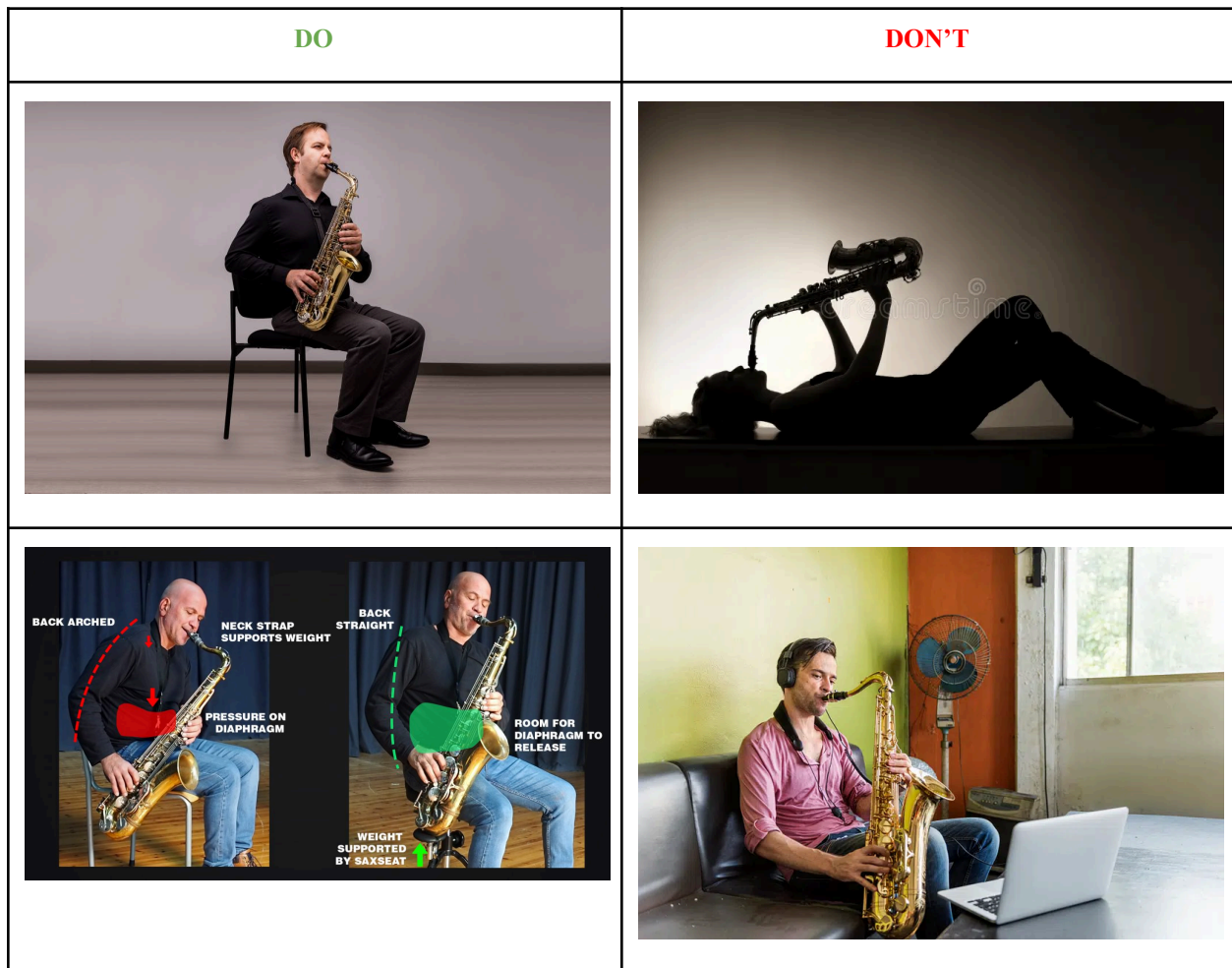
T: First, go ahead and raise your head to look straight ahead.

T: When we sit as musicians, we don't want to be slouched in our chairs, or have our backs against the back of the chair (if yours has one). Go ahead for me, please adjust yourself at half least half way away from the edge of the chair. Now, with your legs, go ahead and spread out comfortably, and put your feet flat on the floor. This is our first step in our posture. This should all feel very comfortable and, most importantly, relaxed.

T: The next part of our posture starts with our hips and spine. Go ahead and place your fingers on the top of your head, and imagine that you're like a puppet, or there's a string attached to the top of your head. With this string, someone is pulling you up very slowly—starting from the hips, getting those straight, and each of the bones in our spine stacking nicely on top of each other.

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T: Once we've done this, go ahead and drop your hands by the side of your chair. Next, we're going to relax our shoulders by rolling them up all the way up to our ears, then backwards and down, letting the hands drop. After we've done all this, we should feel nice and relaxed. Here are some examples of what our musician posture should look and should not look like after we've completed these steps.



Breathing

T: The next part to being a wind musician is how we breathe and how we use our air. When we breathe daily, we don't have to think about it. But when we use our air as musicians, it's something different and we have to get used to it

T: I first want you to just breathe in and out for me naturally

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(Students do so)

T: When you were breathing, you were probably breathing in through your nose. As a wind musician, we are going to be breathing in through our mouth.

T: Knowing this, go ahead and take some deep breaths through your mouth. But when you do this, I want you to place one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach.

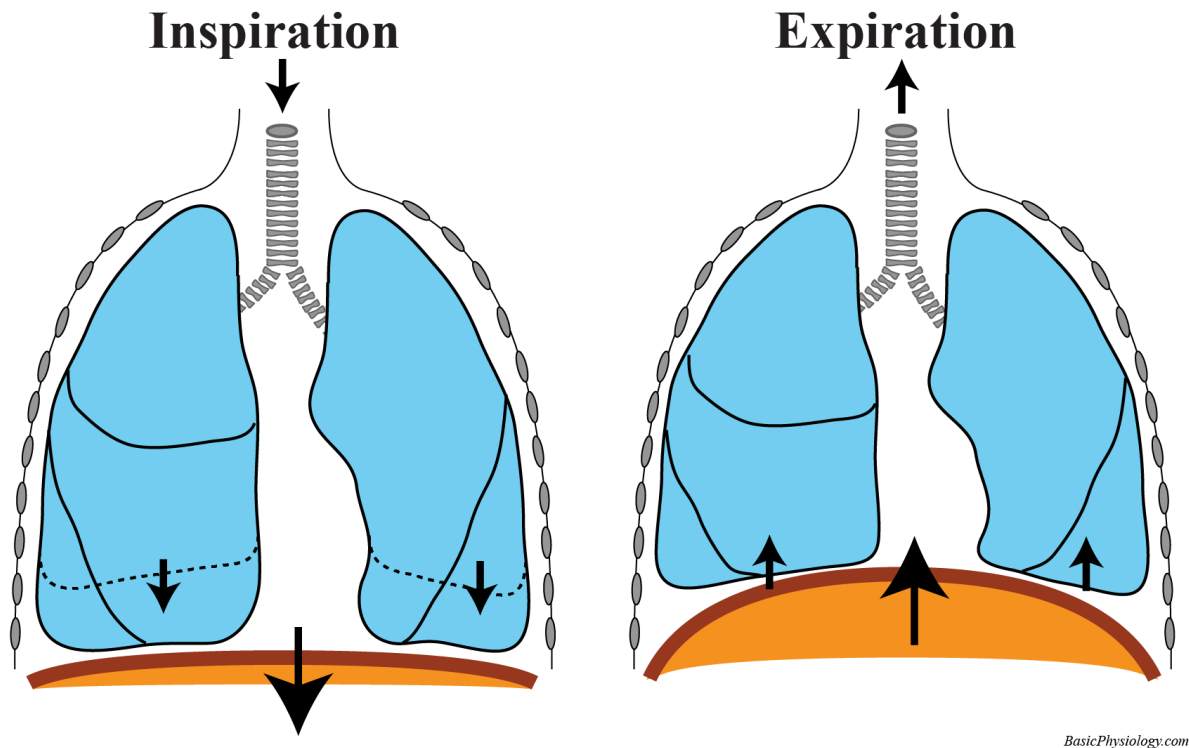
(Students do so)

T: Now, when you did that, you probably noticed your chest expanding. As a wind musician, using our chest isn't quite how we'll want to breathe because it's actually ineffective.

T: The reason why we have a hand on our stomach is because below this area, we have a muscle called the diaphragm. As a wind musician, we want to activate our diaphragm to expand our lungs to take in as much air as possible. Imagine you're like a whale when they're feeding, taking in all that water



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T: Taking deep breaths again, try and activate and expand your diaphragm. To do this, before we breathe, go ahead and say “wow” for me and try taking some nice deep breaths using your diaphragm. You’ll know you’ve done this right when you feel your stomach moving in and out, and your chest isn’t moving up or down significantly.

Breathing Gym

T: Our lungs and diaphragm are just like any other muscle, and the only way we can improve their performance is by training them. We’re going to do some breathing exercises for our lungs and diaphragm to train them properly and regularly.

2’s & 4’s:

T: The first exercises we’ll do are 2’s and 4’s. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts and breathe out for 4 counts. We’ll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 2 counts of preparation and 2 counts of breathing between each set.

1. **T**
2. **S + T**
 - a. **S**
 - b. **S + T**

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T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 2 counts of preparation and 2 counts of breathing between each set.

(S do so)

2's & 6's:

T: The next exercise we'll do is 2's and 6's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts and breathe out for 6 counts. We'll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 2 counts of preparation and 2 counts of breathing between each set.

3. **T**

4. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 2 counts of preparation and 2 counts of breathing between each set.

(S do so)

(Optional) 2's & 8's:

T: If you're up for a challenge, try 2's and 8's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts and breathe out for 8 counts. We'll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 2 counts of preparation and 2 counts of breathing between each set.

5. **T**

6. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

Embouchure (w/o Small Piece)

T: Now we're going to go on to how we form our lips and face when we play the saxophone. When we do this, this is called our embouchure. Go ahead and say "embouchure" for me, please.

(S do so)

T: Our embouchure first begins with the angle of our head. When we form our embouchure, we want to look straight ahead, not down at the floor or up at the ceiling.

(S do so)

T: When we play saxophone, we want our bottom lip to roll in very, very slightly, but not by much

T: To do this, we'll say "Vuh", to get that nice stubble lip roll.

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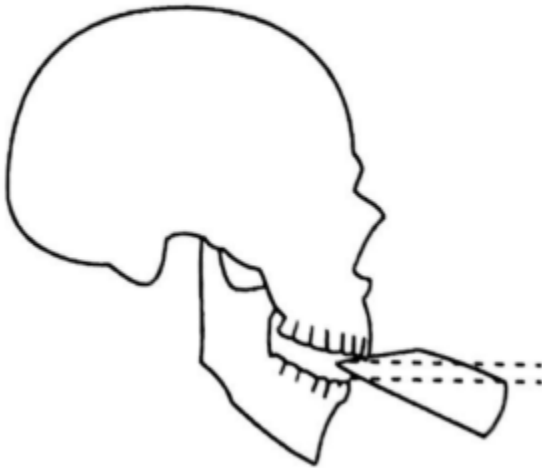
T: Now we're going to get our tongue raised by saying "Hee".

T: Go ahead and give me a thumbs-up right in front of you.

T: Now what I want you to do is to pretend that you're sucking your thumb just like you're a baby again, go ahead and place your thumb in your mouth.

T: When we place our thumb in our mouth, we want to angle our thumb just a little bit down, just below parallel, like 15 to 20 degrees.

saxophone
(narrower jaw
opening)



T: Now we're going to plant our top teeth on top of our thumb. It isn't necessarily biting down on our thumb with force, just a little to keep our thumb secure.

T: Now we're going to make sure our corners are firmly wrapped around our thumb. Imagine your lips are like a drawstring bag that you closed up. If we don't close our drawstring bag, our air will leak and be wasted.

T: With this, we have completed the setup for our embouchure for the saxophone.

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Articulation (w/o Small Piece)

T: Now, when we play any instrument, we don't just play one note forever; instead, we articulate. Say "articulation", for me, please.

T: For a wind musician, articulation means interrupting our breaths out very gently with our tongue. Our air isn't like a light switch we're flicking on and off every time we play, but rather like a running faucet that our hand is passing through—the water never stops flowing, does it?

T: How we articulate is very important. For the saxophone, we want to use the very, very end of the tongue—one taste bud, one atom of the tongue—it should be incredibly light, but also very quick.

T: Go ahead and whisper "Too" for me
(S do so)

T: Notice where your tongue is when you whisper this. It should be hitting the tippy-tippy top of the roof of your mouth, just behind the top teeth and where the gums start to meet.

T: If when you whisper "too," it may not have been hitting this area—maybe the top/roof of the mouth—try again to whisper "doo" but aiming for the middle of your mouth.

T: Now we're going to reform our embouchure. Once we have our thumb in place, firmer corner, go ahead and say "too" again. You should feel the tip of your tongue gently flicking against the tip of your thumb.

Articulation Gym (w/o Small Piece)

T: We're going to do the same exercise as our breathing gym, this time incorporating our saxophone embouchure and articulation. Just like our breathing gym exercise, our tongue is also a muscle that only improves when we train it properly and regularly.

2's & 4's:

T: The first exercises we'll do are 2's and 4's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 4 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

7. **T**

8. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

2's & 6's:

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T: The next exercise we'll do is 2's and 6's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 6 counts. We'll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath.

9. **T**

10. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

(Optional) 2's & 8's:

T: If you're up for a challenge, try 2's and 8's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 8 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

11. **T**

12. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

Setting Up

The Case

T: Now we will talk about opening our saxophone case and setting up the parts for today's lesson

T: At the start of the lesson, I had you put your saxophone in its case to the side. Go ahead and grab it and put it on the floor directly in front of you and your seat.

T: Now, before we open our saxophone case, we have to make sure it's facing the right direction. If it's not facing the right direction, we risk damaging the saxophone and having to get it fixed before we've done any playing.

T: To start, any time you set your case down, always put it on a smooth, flat, and sturdy surface. Don't put it on your legs, a wobbly music stand, or anything like that; use a table or the floor. Go ahead and place it on a table or floor directly in front of you.

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T: Now this is where your case may be different from mine and your friends. Go ahead and see if you can see any logo or brands like “Yamaha, ProTech, Selmer, etc.” If your case has a logo or brand, make sure that it is facing the ceiling now.

T: Some saxophone cases have zippers, and some have handles and latches. Go ahead and find those latches or zippers on your case.

T: If your case has latches, when you open one, they pop up toward the ceiling; You’re on the right track.

T: Now, regardless of whether our case has a latch or a zipper, or a visible logo or brand on the top of the case or not. As long as the thickest part of the case is on the floor, this means that the bottom of the case is on the floor and that our case is facing the right direction

T: Go ahead and open up your case. If your case has zippers, go ahead and zip open your case, and if your case has latches, go ahead and pop up the latches and open up your case.

Today’s Parts

T: With our case, I’m going to identify some parts we will be using today.

T: Please do not take any of these parts out until I ask you to.

The Reed and Caring for it

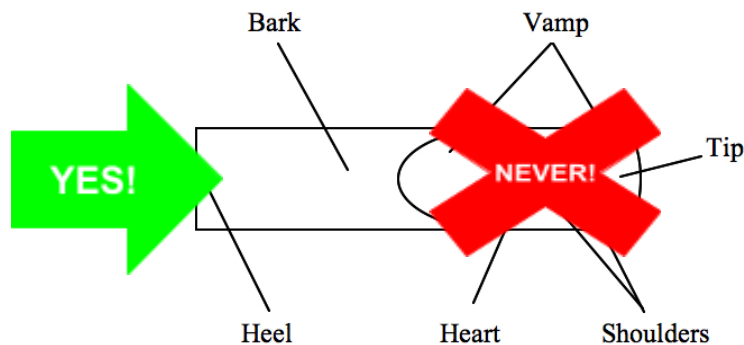
T: The first part of the saxophone is going to be our reeds.

T: Say “reeds” for me, please.

T: Our reeds are what actually produce sound on the saxophone. Basically, when we blow air into the saxophone, the reed vibrates and gives the saxophone body a sound.

T: Because this is how we produce our sound on the saxophone, we must handle our reed correctly and delicately.

T: When handling our reeds, we always want to handle them from the flat, shiny, bottom part called the heel/bark/butt. Whatever you do, **NEVER** handle the reed from the tip!



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T: When we prepare our reed to play, we soak our reeds typically in water, but you can put it in your mouth and soak it with your saliva. However, when soaking the reeds with our saliva, make sure you've rinsed your mouth out with water. Don't put the reed in the mouth if you've had a soda, Gatorade, lemonade, coffee, energy drink, whatever. If it isn't water, don't put the reed in your mouth.

The Neckstrap

T: When we play our saxophone before we grab anything else, we have to grab this one super important part first, before we start. (*show camera*) This part is our neck strap.

T: Go ahead and say "neckstrap" for me, please.

T: The neck strap is important because it holds the weight of the saxophone due to gravity.

T: Go ahead and loosen your neck strap like so (*show camera*) all the way and put it around your neck, with the hook in front of you. This hook here will attach to your saxophone and support it.

The Mouthpiece (Review)

T: The first part of the saxophone we'll talk about is the mouthpiece.

T: Say "mouthpiece" for me.

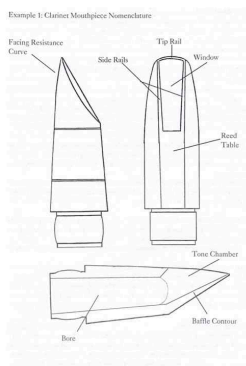
T: Our mouthpiece has two ends on it, one that looks like a point and another that has a smaller black cylinder at the bottom.

T: Your mouthpiece may have a cover on the side that has a point.

T: I'm going to take my mouthpiece out of my case and show it to you.

T: Now I want you to find the parts of your saxophone that look like this, and take it out

T: Go ahead and look at your mouthpiece, and look near the pointed end. You should see a rectangular hole. This is where our reed will go, and when we blow into it, it'll make a sound.



T: Now, you may have noticed this metal piece on your mouthpiece. This is called the ligature

T: Say "ligature" please.

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T: The ligature is what holds our reed onto the mouthpiece.

T: Your ligature probably looks different than mine, but regardless of what it looks like, the screws it has will always be on the right side when looking at it.

T: For right now, we will loosen our screw(s), but not all the way, just a little bit, just enough so we can slide our ligature off upwards with easy

T: Set your ligature and mouthpiece in your lap.

T: While we move on, we're going to start soaking our reeds in our mouths. I've already pre-soaked my reeds so that I can give you instructions.

The Neck (Review)

T: The next part of our saxophone is called the neck.

T: Say, "neck".

T: The neck is a funky-looking part of the saxophone that looks like an L or kinda like a boomerang. The neck has two sides to it. One longer but smaller end with a little bit of brown stuff called cork, and the other is a bit wider and larger, made out of metal.

T: The neck is going to attach to the saxophone at the metal end.

T: Go ahead and take the neck out of your case. And hold it with both of your hands, but very, very gently

T: When we hold our neck, we have to be very careful of this joint right here (point to octave key mechanism). This part of the saxophone is very delicate, so we hold the neck first thing we want to do is gently hold the neck in our non-dominant hand.

T: Next, i'm going to gently put my thumb on top of this key here on the top of the next, and then gently wrap my remaining fingers around the bottom of the neck. Remember that we have to be gentle and not death-grip the neck or anything.



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Small Piece Assembly (Review)

T: Now we're going to go ahead and assemble our mouthpiece and neck to make our "small piece".

T: First, remember to remove the ligature from your mouthpiece, and that both of those parts are in your lap.

T: We're going to screw our mouthpiece and neck together. The brown cork of the neck attaches to the black little cylinder of the mouthpiece.

T: When we attach these parts, we don't want to jam or force these parts together, just gently screwing them together until we see about $\frac{1}{4}$ of our cork. This may take some elbow grease, so don't be afraid, but remember, don't shove the mouthpiece and the neck together.

T: With our mouthpiece and neck together forming our small piece, we're going to go ahead and slip the ligature back on—remembering to keep the screws on the right-hand side.

T: Once we've gotten our ligatures back on, we're going to take our reeds out of our mouths or water, and begin placing them on our mouthpiece. Remember when handling the reed, always handle to from the bottom of.

T: When placing our reed on our mouthpiece, be sure to slide it in from above, and align the reed so that only a sliver of the reed is poking above the black part of the mouthpiece.

T: You can check this by turning your small piece around and having the open end of the neck facing away from you. You should see just a tiny sliver of the reed peeking out.

T: Once that's all set in place, go ahead and re-screw your ligature until the screws are firm. Not tightened all the way, otherwise our reed can't make a sound, but just enough where the screws are loose anymore

T: Go ahead and set your small piece in your lap gently.

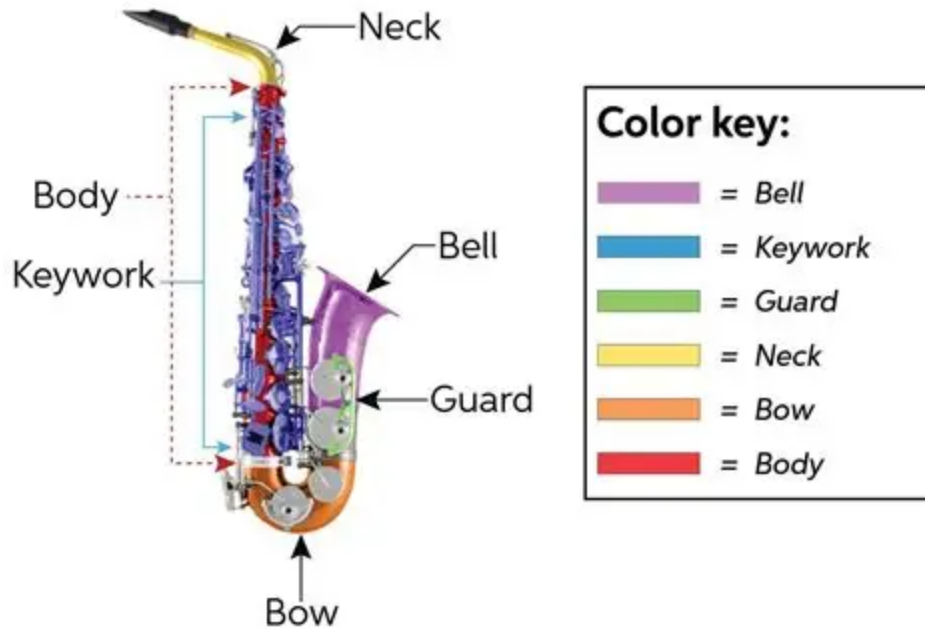
T: With that, we've fully assembled our small piece, and we're ready to move on to the saxophone.

The Body

T: The last part of our saxophone is in our case and is called our body.

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Parts of a Saxophone



T: Say “body” for me, please.

T: The body is the largest part of our saxophone and has two ends. One small hole and one larger hole that flares out.

T: The small end is where our small piece will go, and the large end is our bell, which is where our sounds come out.

T: When we take the body out we want to put our right hand inside the bell, and our cup the curved end at the bottom of the body called the bow/elbow.

T: While it's still in the case, I want you to see if you can find a small "O" on the back of the saxophone, this will be very important in just a second.

T: So no we're going to go ahead and take out our saxophone like that and set it on our lap, with the bell tall end of the body facing our left.

T: Remember that “O” I asked you to find earlier, this is where it comes in. With the hook of our neckstrap, we’re going to hook our neckstrap clip into that little “O” there, and again just set our saxophone back for now. We’re going to go ahead and review our small piece and then we’ll go back to the saxophone in just a second.

Embochure (w/ Small Piece) (Review)

T: Our steps for the embouchure are going to be the exact same as we just did earlier with our thumb.

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T: Remember our embouchure first begins with the angle of our head. We want to look straight ahead, not down at the floor or up at the ceiling.

T: Next, we'll say "Vuh", to get that nice stubble lip roll.

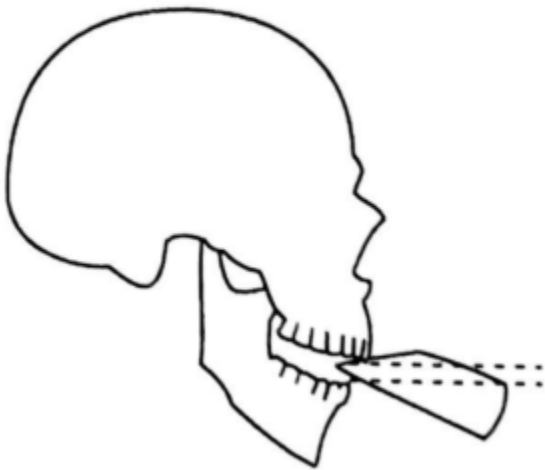


T: Now we're going to get our tongue raised by saying "Hee".

T: Go ahead and put your small piece out directly in front of you.

T: When we place our mouthpiece in our mouth, we want to angle our mouthpiece just a little bit down, just below parallel, like 15 to 20 degrees.

saxophone
(narrower jaw
opening)



T: Now we're going to use that piece of paper we had earlier, and slip it in between the reed and the mouthpiece, just until the paper no longer slips through without having to force it down.

T: Go ahead and gently put your thumb where this point is, and take the paper out. Roughly where this piece of paper ends, is how far the mouthpiece is going to go into our mouth on our bottom lip.

T: Now we're going to plant our top teeth on top of our mouthpiece, with just enough force to keep the mouthpiece secure.

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T: Now we're going to make sure our corners are firmly wrapped around our mouthpiece. Imagine your lips are like a drawstring bag that you closed up. If we don't close our drawstring bag, our air will leak and be wasted.

T: With this, we have completed the setup for our embouchure for the saxophone.

Articulation (w/ Small Piece) (Review)

T: Go ahead and relax

T: Now we're going to go to articulation again, with out small piece.

T: Remember to start by whispering "Too" aiming for the top of the roof of your mouth, just behind the top teeth and where the gums start to meet.

T: Now we're going to reform our embouchure. Once we have our small piece in place, flat chin, and firm corners, go ahead and say "too" again. You should feel the tip of your tongue gently flicking against the tippy top of the mouthpiece, just grazing the reed.

Articulation Gym (w/ Small Piece) (Review)

T: We're going to do the same exercise as our breathing gym, this time incorporating our saxophone embouchure and articulation. Just like our breathing gym exercise, our tongue is also a muscle that only improves when we train it properly and regularly.

2's & 4's:

T: The first exercises we'll do are 2's and 4's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 4 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

13. **T**

14. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

2's & 6's:

T: The next exercise we'll do is 2's and 6's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 6 counts. We'll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath.

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15. **T**

16. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

(Optional) 2's & 8's:

T: If you're up for a challenge, try 2's and 8's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 8 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

17. **T**

18. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

Saxophone Assembly

T: Now we're going to back to our saxophone body.

T: When we took the saxophone body out, we identified the bell and another small opening. This small opening is where our neck/small piece is going to attach.

T: Go ahead, find this small opening at the top, and find a screw on the right side and loosen it up just a little bit. This controls the size of this opening; loosening it up just helps put it in easier.

T: Now we're going to go ahead and gently screw in our neck into this small opening at the top. When we do this, we want to be gentle. Just like we were earlier with the mouthpiece and the neck, we don't want to ram these parts together.

T: When screwing the neck into the body, go all the way down and have the mouthpiece face the back of the saxophone. Now we're going to screw that screw that we undid earlier and tighten it back up. And with that, we have fully assembled our saxophone.

Holding the Saxophone

T: For holding the saxophone, we'll first start with our fingers. Placing the knee on our bell.

T: On the back of the saxophone, near our neckstrap hook, go ahead and take note of an arch below it. This is called our thumb rest, which is where our right thumb will go in just a second.

T: We'll start by shaking our right hand and dropping it down by our sides. Notice the natural soft-C shape of our hand; we want to keep this while we play.

T: We'll go ahead and put our thumb into that thumb rest we noticed earlier. (1)

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T: Now on the opposite side of our thumb, there should be a key, ideally with a pearl, that's where our index finger will go. When we place our fingers on these keys, we want to be near the outside (going away from the saxophone) edge of the keys. (2)

T: Next, our middle finger will go on the next key just below that, again near the outside edge of the key (3)

T: Then to our ring finger will go on the next pearl below (4)

T: And lastly, our pinkies first key of this funky key set



T: Go ahead and wiggle all your fingers except for your thumb, and when you do this, be sure to keep your fingers low.

T: Next, we'll move on to our right hand. We'll still keep our saxophone on our knee, and shake out left hand, drop to our side and keep that natural soft-C shape we have.

T: Above the next strap, there should be a flat disc on the back of saxophone, ideally in black but your may be in brass or something else. This is our thumb rest for our left hand, but when we place it at an angle, about 15 degrees or 2 o'clock on a clock. (1)

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone



T: Next our index finger in our left hand is going to go on the first pearl key, again near the outside edge.
(2)

T: Now your saxophone may have a very tiny pearl key at an angle below your index finger, and then a large pearl key just below your index finger. This larger key is where our middle finger will go (3)

T: Next our ring finger will go on the pearl below our middle finger (4)

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone



T: Lastly, our pinkies will go on this set of funky-looking keys, on the top-most one (5)

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone



T: Go ahead and wiggle all your fingers except for your thumb, and when you do this, be sure to keep your fingers low.

T: Now that we have all our fingers in the correct spot, we now have to get the saxophone in playing position

T: An important thing about playing the saxophone is it's just a piece of metal, and we have to bring this piece of metal to us with our neckstrap.

T: You can either place the saxophone to your right side, or directly in between your legs.

T: Whichever position you choose, you have to make sure you don't hunch over and collapse, breaking your musician posture.

T: You want to adjust the neck strap so that the mouthpiece falls naturally into your mouth. If you've chosen to place the saxophone to your right, you will have to turn your mouthpiece a few degrees to your right so the reed is laying flat in your mouth.

T: With that, you have your fully assembled saxophone ready for playing!

Echoing on B

T: We're going to do some playing, but first, I have to teach you a note.

T: Go ahead and lift up all your fingers, except our left thumb; we want to keep it lifted so we don't press our octave key.

T: Now, with all your fingers lifted, we want to only put down our left hand, index finger, on the first pearl key. Go ahead, finger this note and play

T: Now we're going to do some playing.

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone

T: We're going to do the same exercise as our breathing and articulation gyms, this time incorporating our fully assembled saxophone. Just like our breathing gym exercise, our tongue is also a muscle that only improves when we train it properly and regularly.

2's & 4's:

T: The first exercises we'll do are 2's and 4's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 4 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

19. **T**

20. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

2's & 6's:

T: The next exercise we'll do is 2's and 6's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 6 counts. We'll do a total of two (four) sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath.

21. **T**

22. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

(Optional) 2's & 8's:

T: If you're up for a challenge, try 2's and 8's. For this, we will breathe in for 2 counts, breathing out and articulating for 8 counts. We'll do a total of two (four), sets, and between each set, there will be 4 counts of preparation, including the breath

23. **T**

24. **S + T**

a. **S**

b. **S + T**

T: Remember, when we do this, there will be 4 counts in between each set.

(S do so)

Teacher: Chris Dorner
Instrument: Saxophone

Conclusion

T: After today's lesson, you've learned how to sit and breathe like a musician, how to: Open your saxophone case; Care for your saxophone reed, how to form a saxophone embouchure and how to articulate on the saxophone, along with some exercises you can use in your personal practice. As well as how to assemble the saxophone.