

8 Layer Trom “Bone-In” tonation Supreme

This recipe is intended to aid in the improvement of accurate slide technique by clarifying, emphasizing and reinforcing the difference between half steps and whole steps.

The design of the slide trombone offers the player an opportunity to play perfectly in tune at all times. Unfortunately, along with the ability to play perfectly in tune comes the possibility of playing completely out of tune. Although no one plays perfectly in tune all of the time, some have more success than others. Accurate intonation is a lifelong pursuit for the conscientious trombonist. Accurate intonation is a combination of a good sound, keen intervallic sense and instantaneous adjustment. A tuner is a valuable tool but not nearly as valuable as a well trained ear. Although the tuner is one of the tools in the intonation toolbox, well-schooled trombonists understand and are sensitive to the additional subtleties of harmonic intonation. Use the tuner as only a point of reference.

One particularly difficult passage involves going from fourth position to first position with one note in between. For example playing D-E-F in a rapid manner as part of a musical passage. The tendency I see in many students (and also in myself) is to carelessly split the difference between fourth position and first position, which produces a quite flat E. To fix this, the player must concentrate on keeping the E high enough by playing a true second position E. The same would apply for keeping the E-flat low, if the same passage contained an E-flat. Likewise, the same concept would need to be applied in all registers and all passages to attain a high degree of intonational accuracy. It is merely a matter of paying attention. A recorder with half-speed playback capabilities is a very valuable tool in building accurate intonation. Being aware of the tendency is the first step toward correcting it. This recipe will help the player develop a new appreciation for the higher degree of clarity that precise slide technique produces.

Ingredients:

Trombone with slide in good working order
Mouthpiece
Electronic Tuner
Concentration
10-15 minutes daily

To prepare this highly beneficial dish, examine the chart below:

Layer	Step Formula	Sample Ingredients
1	H-H-H	F-E-Eb-D
2	H-H-W	F-E-Eb-Db
3	H-W-H	F-E-D-Db
4	H-W-W	F-E-D-C
5	W-H-H	F-Eb-D-Db
6	W-H-W	F-Eb-D-C
7	W-W-H	F-Eb-Db-C
8	W-W-W	F-Eb-Db-Cb

H=Half-step W=Whole-step

Procedure:

Use an electronic tuner to get the instrument as close to “in tune” as possible.

For each of the above layers, apply the following rhythmic patterns:

- A) Repeat each pitch 4 times descending then ascending, returning to the first note. Repeat the pattern twice.
- B) Repeat each note twice. Repeat the pattern 3 times.
- C) One note per pitch, repeating the pattern 4 times.

Once the pattern of the layer is memorized, observe the slide to make certain that the notes are in the same location ascending as they were descending. Combine visual and aural senses to zero-in on crystal clear accuracy. After comfort is gained, increasing the tempo will provide the added benefit of working on clear articulation (another bane of the trombonist’s existence).

Tasty variances include spicing up the recipe by applying various, predetermined articulations, dynamics and executing the patterns in all registers.

After a very short time a heightened awareness of half-step, whole-step intonation will result, which will be healthy and beneficial to all.