

## **Trumpet Tips: Multiple Tonguing**

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Learning to multiple tongue is a crucial technique in the development of brass players and especially trumpet players. So much of our history and tradition is based on fanfare figures. Even Franz Joseph Haydn, when wanting to add "trumpet" figures to his landmark concerto wrote a three beat fanfare. Like any technique for the trumpet, it needs daily practice for development and later, maintenance. In this essay, I will map out a routine for effective development/maintenance of multiple tonguing.

It is of vital importance to start slow. By slow, I mean slow. Think quarter note equals 60 (or slower, if necessary)! Be patient, it is not a race. It is not important how quickly you get to the desired result. Rather, it is important that the desired result be of high quality. Too many times the development of multiple tonguing technique is completely derailed due to rushing the process. There is an excellent (and quick read) discussion of multiple tonguing in Keith Johnson's book *Brass Performance and Pedagogy*. A former colleague of mine from Murray State also has an excellent method with multiple tonguing exercises that move at a more measured pace than Arban's method. Check out *Basic Skills for the Developing Trumpeter* by Eric Swisher.

Of great important is remembering to conceive of the articulation syllables correctly. TU and KU are what are commonly used. In the english language, these get pronounced TOO and KOO (or worse, TUH and KUH). These pronunciations have the effect of putting the tongue at the back of the throat, the wrong place to articulate from. Arban, who we associate these syllables with in modern days, was French. The correct pronunciation is closer to TEW and KEW. Simply saying these syllables has the effect of forming an embouchure. Perhaps there was a reason behind their use.

Using materials likely at hand (certainly if you got your assigned books from your freshman year), Clarke's *Technical Studies* are a fount of usefulness. Many of these studies are easily adapted to multiple tonguing studies. They can all be altered to double and triple tonguing by changing the eighth notes to sixteenths or triplet sixteenths. The repeat sequence should go like this:

1. Slur as printed to establish proper airflow (more on this later).
2. Legato single tongue, focusing on the moving long tone Clarke just intended for you to play the first time.
3. Legato "K" tongue with the goal being to make it sound like the articulated pass you just played.

4. Repeat the first three steps until successful. Accomplishing that, now change the rhythm to work on double and triple tonguing by doubling or tripling each pitch. For thorough practice, use patterns in this sequence: KT, TK, TTK, TKT.

Now, that is a lot of repeats (7 total if you do everything), so do not try to do them in one shot without a break. Remember that the tongue is a muscle and will tighten up without sufficient rest. A good way to divide up the exercises and make sure you are practicing all keys is to label each exercise as an A, B, C, or D. Practice all of the A exercises on one day. B exercises are the next day. C and D exercises would follow on the third and fourth days. Then repeat the sequence.

To work on multiple tonguing with each articulation on a different pitch, the above sequence needs changed a little. On a superficial level, Clark Studies I, VII, and VIII work well for triple tonguing. Studies II, IV, V, VI, and IX work well as double tonguing exercises. Due to being arpeggios, I recommend Study III be reserved until after the K attack is consistent and equal to the T.

1. Play as printed.
2. Play legato tongued.
3. If double tonguing is being practiced use KT, then TK. If triple tonguing, TTK then TKT.
4. If Step 3 was (honestly) successful, repeat at a faster speed, working until the fastest, good sounding speed is reached. Take note of the tempo and use this as a the tempo to continue to improve upon.

All of this can also be used to help increase the speed of the single tongue, as well. Commonly, trumpeters refer to "the break," described as this tempo range when a piece is too fast to single tongue and too slow to double tongue. Frankly, the existence of this is the player's fault. Not enough time has been spent developing a sufficiently fast single tongue and sufficiently slow multiple tongue. Being able to single tongue sixteenth notes at a tempo of quarter note equals 120 and multiple tongue at a tempo of 108 creates a 12 bpm overlap instead of a break.

A last note on multiple tonguing, and probably the most important, is that, like all articulating, it is not about the tongue, but the air. Wind must continue to move efficiently past the lips and into the trumpet. There is a tendency for players to tongue harder the more that they articulate. This leads to reduced airflow. The opposite has to happen. When tonguing more and/or harder, a greater amount of wind is required to balance. Focusing on the TEW and KEW syllables while remembering to prioritize moving wind into the trumpet will create a positive result for multiple tonguing development.

But, start slow!