

A Practice Guide for the Contemporary Saxophonist



*Includes warm-ups, intonation studies, all scales,
ideas for jazz improvisation, and more!*

By Ed Peffer

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Introduction

I started this book back in my undergraduate years in the early 1990s at California State University at Long Beach as a way to keep myself organized in my practice routine, and over a decade later I have decided to formulize this into a comprehensive practice book for the saxophonist. This book was designed in order for the saxophonist to essentially master the instrument over its entire range, and at the same time cover different aspects of tonalities, including the majors, minors, augmented and diminished scales. Included in this book are four different warm-up exercises: long tones, octaves, tonic/dominant, and articulation exercises – these are very important for development of the saxophone tone quality and for correct intonation throughout the whole saxophone range. It is best to practice these exercises with a metronome and a chromatic tuner, although the tuner should be used for reference only. With the proper placement of the mouthpiece on the neck cork, the saxophonist will develop, over time, a sense of where the saxophone plays in tune with itself – this can be guided by a tuner.

When practicing these exercises, one should pay close attention for rhythmic accuracy. The saxophonist should start these exercises slowly at first, with a metronome, and gradually increase the tempo when the patterns become more familiar and can be played evenly and comfortably. One of the goals of this book is try to memorize some of these exercises and patterns and transpose them into different keys. This is a great workout for your brain as well as your saxophone playing! Furthermore, some thought should be given to the concept of blowing the saxophone with a constant, focused airstream, and that the air should be blown to the bottom of the horn. The tonic to dominant studies, as well as the octave matching exercises, are excellent studies toward mastering the intonation of the saxophone.

I find that the wide leaps section (fourths, fifths, and sixths) is especially challenging, however these studies are important and will help the player hear the correct intervals on his/her saxophone and thus improve intonation skills. I would suggest practicing these slowly at first and keep the air constantly supported to the bottom of the horn. I find it helpful to use a tuner to help guide you in this process.

This book is not an “all in one” book, but I feel that these **are** the most important exercises to practice if anyone desires to truly master the saxophone. I would like to thank some of the very wonderful and inspiring saxophonists that I have been very fortunate to have studied with, including Leo Potts, Jeff Benedict, Penny Watson, Ernie Delfante, Eric Marienthal, and Bob Sheppard. This book is dedicated to saxophonists everywhere.

I hope you enjoy working with this book, and reap the benefits of constantly developing and improving as a saxophonist. Best of luck, and happy playing!

Ed Peffer