

# The Tuba/Euphonium Quick Reference Sheet

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## Mouthpiece Recommendations:

### **Euphonium:**

- Denis Wick SM Series (my recommendations are the 3 and 4)
- Schilke 51 or 51D

### **Tuba:**

- Conn Helleburg (my first recommendation for young tubists)
- Schilke 66 (a great alternative to the Conn Helleburg)

## Care & Maintenance:

### **Rotary Valves:**

- Remember, there are 3 points that you can oil:
  - External Moving Joints – Bearing Oil (oil every 2 weeks or more)
  - The Rotary Pin and Back-Plate – Bearing Oil (oil every 2-4 weeks)
  - Internal Oiling through the Valve Tubing – Rotary Oil (oil every 3-6 weeks)
- The most competitive/affordable oils available right now are synthetic blends, and my general recommendation is: Hetman Valve Oil.

### **Piston Valves:**

- I like to suggest that students oil both the inside of the valve casing and the piston itself, then to spin the valve in the casing. This will evenly coat both surfaces.
- There are several options when choosing Piston Valve Oil, but you want to stick with either *Petroleum-Based* or *Synthetic*. Do not mix these!
- Pistons tend to need oil every 1-3 weeks, depending on playing habits.
- Avoid anything with sediment or noticeable odor. My recommendation is *Al Cass Fast Valve Oil*, a petroleum based, odor-free oil.

### **Tuning Slides:**

- Tuning slide creams/greases need to be cleaned off and re-applied every 3-5 weeks.
- Place a small amount of grease on the slide, and then rotate the slide into the casing in order to evenly coat both surfaces.
- My recommendation is: Selmer Tuning Slide & Cork Grease because of its easy applicator, cleaning effect, and durability.

## The Fourth Valve, & Upgrading to Large Bore

### **The Fourth Valve:**

- The Fourth Valve on both the Tuba and Euphonium is designed to replace the 1-3 valve combination. Players can also use 2-4 to replace the 1-2-3 valve combination.
- It is essential to train your students to use this as soon as they have access to a 4 valve instrument. The 1-3 valve combo is much too short to play in tune (4.5 inches too short

on a euphonium, and nearly 9 inches too short on a tuba), and will save your ensemble tons of time and effort when it comes to intonation.

- I suggest that students be upgraded to a 4 valve tuba or euphonium as soon as is possible or comfortable for them.

### **Upgrading Euphonium Players to Large Bore:**

- While it is not always an option for some players (due to budget), I like to suggest that students upgrade to a large bore instrument by their freshman year in high school.
- The large bore instruments have a much more resonant and characteristic sound.
- Students who upgrade from a small bore trombone would be wise to keep a small bore instrument for use in marching band and if they hope to play 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> trombone in a jazz ensemble.

### Etude Book & Study Recommendations:

#### **Recommendations for Tuba/Euphonium (Advanced Players):**

- The Arban Complete Method, The Complete Bordogni Vocalises, The Tyrell Progressive Studies, The Kopprasch 60 Selected Studies.

#### **Recommendations for Tuba/Euphonium (Early/Intermediate Players):**

- The Fink Studies in Legato, The Rubank Advanced Method, The “First” and “Second” Studies for Tuba ~or~ Euphonium.

#### **Recommendations for Euphonium (Advanced):**

- Blume 36 Studies for Trombone with F Attachment, Trop Chops Circuit Training for Euphonium.

#### **Recommendations for Tuba (Advanced):**

- Blazhevich 70 Studies for BB Flat Tuba Volume 1.

### General Tips:

- The Healthy Tuba/Euphonium Embouchure manifests as a “slight frown,” with firm and downturned corners.
- Jaw openness is a largely debated issue in the Tuba/Euph world. I suggest that students have a relaxed and open jaw position when they play, somewhat akin to how the jaw sits when we say “Huh?” Often, young players will learn to clench their jaw shut, which can cause a lot of long-term problems.
- Tuba/Euph Players will often learn to articulate by chewing/jaw motion rather than tonguing, and it is worth watching young players for this habit. Helping them to wind pattern and work with the “Doh” syllable for tonguing will help cure this.
- The High Register is a constant challenge for young brass players. There are two quick ways to help students with the high register:
  - Always support with more air as you ascend (instead of backing off)
  - As you ascend, gently roll your lower lip inwards and direct your airstream downwards.
- Encourage your Brass Players to sing intervals and work with tuning drones or to play with other brass players to improve intonation. After they get a strong connection with singing, then it is time to have them try buzzing or half-valving to continue to develop a musical connection between their aural music and kinesthetic act of music-making.

- An expected skillset of any Tuba/Euph player is the ability to transpose octaves at sight because of the tendency for these three instruments to share parts and etude books with other instruments. Help your students prepare for this expectation by starting them on the practice early, possibly as early as 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- One of the key elements to developing a characteristic sound on a brass instrument is *listening to outstanding brass players*. Encourage your students to find soloists on Spotify and other online resources and listen regularly to these amazing players. If you would like recommendations of soloists, or links to my suggested Spotify playlists, please email me and I will be glad to share these with you.

