

Natural Airflow and the WindStick

1. Natural Airflow is a phenomenon that occurs after a deep breath is taken. When you inhale correctly (use the **WindBag** and **WindGauge** to improve breathing efficiency) the air pressure inside the lungs is much higher than atmospheric pressure outside of the body. A natural equalisation of air pressure occurs - Natural Airflow, and you must learn to use the power of this to play easily and efficiently, in all registers of the trumpet.
2. As simple as it may seem, the **WindStick** is one of the important tools to use in your practice routine. Most players overblow causing the abdominal muscles to push too hard on the lungs, putting excessive pressure on the aperture. The aperture of the lips must be free to vibrate and overblowing causes it to tense up, causing back pressure in the throat and unwanted tension and strain throughout the body.
3. Take a deep breath, feeling the rib cage expand and the chest rise at the top of the breath. Place the **WindStick** in the aperture of your lips and allow the air to flow freely. DO NOT push the air through the **WindStick**. Notice that if you try to stop the airflow at the top of the breath, the only way you can do this is by tensing the muscles around the abdomen causing the throat to close.
4. It is amazing how little airflow is actually required to get a solid, resonant and centred note on the trumpet. The purpose of the **WindStick** is to help you understand and experience Natural Airflow, so when playing your instrument, you can BACK OFF the force and allow nature to do the work for you. Use the **WindStick** regularly during the day either when practising, walking around or sitting at your desk.
5. Put about 7mm of the **WindStick** in between your lips so you can feel the end of it with your tongue. Take a deep breath and let the airflow begin, then quickly strike the end of the **WindStick** several times with the tip of your tongue. This is the aperture that creates your airstream when playing, so develop an understanding of your airstream and how the lips respond to Natural Airflow and then play in the same, relaxed way.
6. Your aim is to play as you would sing. Your natural voice is at the vocal cords and the trumpet is an extension of your voice. The best singers have a relaxed and resonant sound so let your lips respond to Natural Airflow in the same way your vocal cords respond when singing.
7. Blow fast then slow through the **WindStick** to feel how the muscles of the face and body react to an increase in internal air pressure. Remember, physical strain and tension reduces resonance and make playing difficult. Relax and play easily! If it is hard, you are over exerting unnecessary muscles.