

From Chapter 1 “GETTING STARTED”

While I was with Maynard Ferguson’s band, I remember asking Maynard how he kept his chops up while he was **not** touring. He said the hardest thing to do at the beginning of our break, would be taking his horn out of its case after he got home. Maynard told me he would finally take the horn out of the case after resting a day or two, and place it on a table in a central location of his house. He would then play a little game with himself: every time he’d pass the table, he had to pick up his horn and play for 5 or 10 minutes before he would put the horn back on the table and move on. He would do this throughout his day. By the time the day was over, he told me he would have played for about 1 or 2 hours. Maynard said he felt this was good for preserving strength, as well as keeping his chops up.

The selection (and accomplishing) of simple goals creates a better attitude about practicing and playing. Having a good attitude helps a student learn quicker. In time, through doing this, a person’s goals will increase, as well as their **ability** to accomplish more goals.

The important thing is to start simple and increase the level of difficulty on an easy gradient. Acknowledging yourself for accomplishing your goals is also very important. Be your best friend. Let yourself know when you have succeeded and by the same token, take responsibility for your growth.

Practicing is a necessary ingredient for becoming an accomplished trumpet player and can actually be an enjoyable experience if you approach it correctly. Set reasonable goals you can accomplish in spurts and you will have a lot of fun playing. Having a positive attitude will help in your development and encourage continued practice.