


# Carmine Caruso Method

*Adapted by Julie Landsman*

**This is a method that helps prepare your body to play music.**

1. **TAP YOUR FOOT.** Tapping your foot helps the body to feel the rhythm needed to coordinate over two hundred muscles. More than just thinking about the timing, foot tapping connects the feel of the time to the body (kinesthetically). Feel the downbeats and upbeats.
2. Keep the mouthpiece on your lips throughout the entire exercise. This reduces the chances of resetting the embouchure in a different place on your mouth, and makes it easier to develop good chops.
3. Keep the blow steady and constant. Always move the air through the instrument when playing anything! If the air stream is steady and well supported, then it is easier to develop a good embouchure. Here is an analogy: think of the lips as skis on the water. As long as the boat is moving, the skis stay on the water. When the boat slows down, the skis dig in, and when the boat stops, you fall off. This is what happens to the lips when the air is not being steadily pushed through them. An air stream that is constantly feeding the lips will develop a better balance of muscles.
4. Breathe through the nose. This rule goes along with #2. Try to maintain the same setting of the embouchure while breathing. This reduces the number of variables involved in playing the horn, and helps develop a healthy embouchure more quickly. If you experience stuffed sinuses, breathe through the corners of the mouth, and try not to disturb the setting.
5. Ready – Set – Play! Whether practicing Caruso exercises or any music at all, it is essential before starting to set up one measure of subdivided time. Whether action is starting a note, moving to another note, or ending a note, the subdivision is equally important. (i.e. )

The importance of being ready and set to play through precision subdivision and timing cannot be over-emphasized! Whether practicing Caruso exercises, orchestral excerpts, playing in orchestra, or chamber group, it is essential to be ready to play well before the first note comes out. Therefore, always, follow the rule of giving your body at least one measure of subdivided time before your first entrance. Having your body ready before the note comes out gives you a huge advantage!

6. Unless otherwise indicated, all exercises are to be executed at a healthy mezzo forte; no louder.

## Sample Practice Schedule Beginning-Intermediate

### Week 1

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

### Week 2

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 2nds, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

### Week 3

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 3rds, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Chromatics down

### Week 4

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 4ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Chromatics down

Harmonic Series

### Week 5

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 5ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Chromatics down

Harmonic Series

### Week 6

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 6ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Chromatics down

Harmonic Series

Noodles down, slurred, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," no variations

### Week 7

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 7ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Chromatics down

Harmonic Series

Noodles down starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," no variations

Spider in quarter notes

Week 8

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: octaves, ascending chromatically (C, C#, D, etc), Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Low register: Arpeggios down

Harmonic Series

Noodles down starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," standard and variation 1

Spider in quarter and eighth notes

Week 9

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Choose any interval that you'd like to do. You may consider starting on low G or low C if your high register has developed well. If you need more help with the high register, start on middle G.

Low register: Arpeggios down or chromatics down

Harmonic Series

Noodles down, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," standard or variation 1, or both. You may also consider starting the noodle on middle "E"

Spider in quarter and eighth notes

# Sample Practice Schedule

## **Advanced-Professional**

### Week 1

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

### Week 2

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 2nds, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

### Week 3

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 3rds, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Harmonic Series

Low register: Chromatics down

### Week 4

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 4ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Harmonic Series

Low register: Chromatics down

Noodles down, slurred, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," no variations

### Week 5

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 5ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Harmonic Series

Low register: Chromatics down

Noodles down, slurred, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," no variations

Spiders slurred

### Week 6

Six Notes

Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 6ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

Harmonic Series

Low register: Arpeggios down

Noodles down, slurred, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," normal and variation 1

Spiders slurred

Note Tasting

## Week 7

### Six Notes

#### Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: 7ths, Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

#### Harmonic Series

Low register: Chromatics down or Arpeggios down

Noodles down starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," normal and variation 1.

Spiders slurred

Note Tasting

## Week 8

### Six Notes

#### Lips Mouthpiece Horn

Intervals: octaves, ascending chromatically (C, C#, D, etc), Pedal F#, Chromatic Scale

#### Harmonic Series

Low register: Arpeggios down

Noodles down, starting from third-space "C" and from middle "G," normal and variation 1

Spider slurred

Note Tasting

Dynamic Studies

Feel free to include 9ths and 10ths in future weeks, or return to smaller intervals. Pop-out noodles are helpful to iron out register breaks. Air for three beats, note for three beats helps stiff chops.

# I. THE SIX NOTES

Even though there are more than six!

Play exercises with one steady air stream. Start with whichever version is easiest.

Be Ready – Set – Play!

[B] = Breath attack\*

[T] = Tongue attack

\* Breath Attacks provide the easiest way to get the lips in focus without “jumpstarting” the note with the tongue. Feel free to use tongue on the first note, if at first, the breath attack is a struggle.

## SIX NOTES – Version #1

$\text{♩} = 60$  [ Do not play subdivision. Feel it!]

Musical notation for Version #1 of the Six Notes exercise. It consists of five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It starts with a series of eighth notes, followed by a series of quarter notes. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains quarter notes with attack markings: B, T, T, B, T, T, B, T, T. The remaining three staves continue the exercise with various note values and accidentals.

## Version #2

$\text{♩} = 60$

Musical notation for Version #2 of the Six Notes exercise. It consists of five staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains quarter notes with attack markings: B, T, T. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The fourth and fifth staves have bass and treble clefs respectively, both with a key signature of one flat. A note in the third staff is marked with a sharp sign. A bracketed instruction is placed between the second and third staves.

[Maintain “contact” from 3<sup>rd</sup> space C to middle C]

## II. LIPS/MOUTHPIECE/HORN

Do this exercise in this suggested sequence, however, make it struggle-free and with as much ease as possible.

- 1) Buzz all pitches only with the lips.
- 2) Buzz all pitches on the mouthpiece.
- 3) Play all notes on the horn with valves. Version A: finger the first note, bend the pitch to the second note. Versions B and C: finger both notes.

The three buzzes (steps 1-3) do not need to be exactly the same. The goal is to keep the blow steady, and maintain the buzz throughout the entire exercise. Attempting to manipulate the embouchure in any way will inhibit the progress of this exercise. Just produce the sound in the easiest way possible, without trying to place the chops in a certain way. Do not force the lips into place, even if all three events are slightly different from each other.

If comfortable, continue exercises lower.

$\text{♩} = 60$

A.

B.

B.

C.

You may choose the easiest note to start. These exercises are suggested starting places. Do only as many that work with ease. In due time, expand outwards from your starting note. Do not free buzz higher than a third space C, and descend as low as is comfortable.

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### III. INTERVAL STUDIES

- 1) Warm up your upper register before playing this exercise. This can be done either in your normal way, or by playing some slow, slurred scales into your comfortable upper register.
- 2) Starting note can vary. (For example – middle G, low G, or low C.)
- 3) Complete each interval set before stopping. If you need a place to rest, complete the current interval and then rest for 10 seconds. After this time, pick up where you left off, using precision timing to restart.
- 4) Go as high as you can keeping the same mouthpiece set, but do not force this exercise.
- 5) Do not play with pain.
- 6) Increase interval size every week. (For example – 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, up to 10ths).

♩ = 60 [Subdivision!]

B

[Play as high as you can without pain.]

Immediately after finishing the intervals, play the pedal F# three times softly for as long as possible. This is an essential part of relaxing the chops after the intervals, or after any other strenuous playing.

*pp*

Play chromatics smoothly with ease. Never force any of these exercises, therefore choose start and end notes wisely. Regardless of whether the notes speak, go for the action of the notes without force.

--Optional--



## IV. OPEN HARMONIC SERIES

- 1) Choose the beginning that works with ease.
- 2) Ride the steady airstream.
- 3) Be strict with your subdivision, especially when establishing your upbeats.
- 4) Practice whistling! Notice how your lips and tongue move forward in your mouth when you ascend.

$J = 60$

The musical score consists of seven staves of music, each starting with a different point in the harmonic series. The starting points are labeled as 123, 13, 23, 12, 1, 2, and 0. Each staff contains a sequence of notes, some with accidentals, and is marked with a slur. Below the main score are three alternative starting points labeled 'Beginning 1', 'Beginning 2', and 'Beginning 3', each shown on a single staff with a slur.

## V. LOW REGISTER

- 1) As you descend, maintain even and equal pressure on both lips.
- 2) Do not let go of your lip contact and mouthpiece pressure as you descend!
- 3) Maintain mouthpiece contact in the rests and breathe through the nose. Take beats 3 & 4 to inhale and prepare for the downbeat.
- 4) Follow these low register exercises with the chromatic scale. (See INTERVAL STUDIES, p.5)

These exercises may be used as a warm-down. Use of a tuner may help determine the proper mouthpiece contact and pressure. Often players will let go of contact with the lower lip [sometimes upper], however better results may be achieved with this technique of keeping good contact with lips [and teeth!] with the mouthpiece, *especially* when dropping the jaw.

### Chromatics Down

[LT] = Legato tongue (keep it connected)

$\text{♩} = 60$

etc. go as low as you can

### Arpeggios Down

$\text{♩} = 60$

etc. go as low as you can

## VI. FLEXIBILITY

### Noodles

These exercises increase flexibility and help to “iron out” inconsistencies in embouchure set and sound quality throughout the registers. Play as slowly as necessary to maintain mouthpiece contact and tone integrity. The exercises below show suggested starting pitches; feel free to start on any note, in order to work out break registers. Breathe through the nose. Play slowly, then twice as fast. Always keep a double- or half-time relationship between tempos.

#### Noodles Down

$\text{♩} = 30, 60, 120$

The exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains a sequence of eighth notes descending from a high register to a low register, with a slur underneath. The second staff continues the descending sequence of eighth notes, also with a slur underneath.

#### Noodles Variation 1

$\text{♩} = 30, 60, 120$

The exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff features eighth notes with slurs underneath, descending from a high register to a low register. The second staff continues the descending sequence of eighth notes with slurs underneath.

#### Pop-out Noodle

$\text{♩} = 30, 60, 120$

The exercise consists of two staves of music. The first staff features eighth notes with dynamic markings *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff* underneath, with a slur underneath. The second staff continues the sequence of eighth notes with dynamic markings *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff* underneath, with a slur underneath.

Other suggested starting pitches:

G: J = 30, 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for the G major scale in treble clef. The first staff contains the first eight notes (G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4) and the second staff contains the remaining eight notes (E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3). The notes are connected by a long slur across both staves.

E: J = 30, 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for the E major scale in treble clef. The first staff contains the first eight notes (E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4) and the second staff contains the remaining eight notes (G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3). The notes are connected by a long slur across both staves.

C:

J = 30, 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for the C major scale in bass clef. The first staff contains the first eight notes (C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4) and the second staff contains the remaining eight notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1). The notes are connected by a long slur across both staves.

# FLEXIBILITY

## Spider and Snake

**Spider** – If a breath is needed, add a few beats and breathe through the nose, taking care to leave the embouchure undisturbed. Subdivide, feeling upbeats.

First, start slowly:

$\text{♩} = 60$

Then once more, double-time:

$\text{♩} = 60$

**Snake** – Add the snake when the spider can be executed smoothly in both variations. When both the spider and snake can be executed smoothly in faster speeds, change the starting note.

$\text{♩} = 60, 120$

### Variations for Spider and Snake

- 1) All Tongued attacks
- 2) Start on different notes.

\*\*\*When using the tongue, be sure to use the same air flow as when playing slurred.\*\*\*

Spider from E:

J = 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for 'Spider from E'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a long slur spanning the entire piece. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and a final double bar line.

Spider from G:

J = 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for 'Spider from G'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a long slur spanning the entire piece. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and a final double bar line.

Snake from E:

J = 60, 120

Two staves of musical notation for 'Snake from E'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a long slur spanning the entire piece. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and a final double bar line.

Snake from G:

J = 60, 120

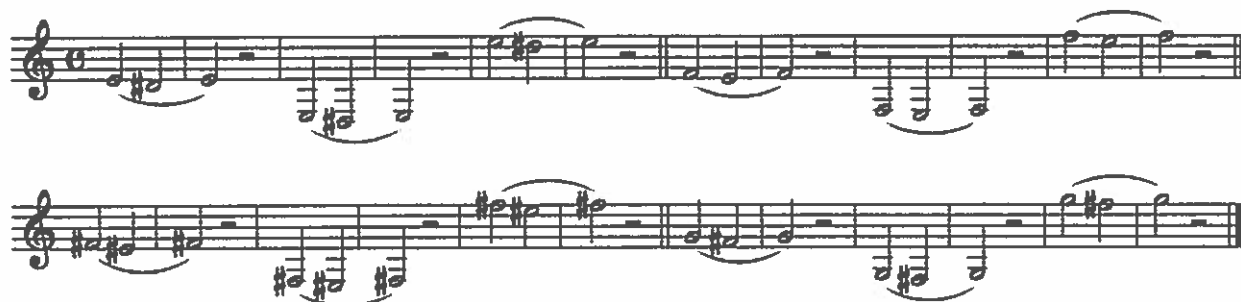
Two staves of musical notation for 'Snake from G'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a long slur spanning the entire piece. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and a final double bar line.

## VII. REBALANCE AND RECOVERY

Through the practice of note tasting, your body learns to respond reflexively to a precisely timed setup. The “taste” of a note includes the subdivision and timing, hearing it, visually picturing the note, and feeling it in your chops. These are all right brain, high sensation-based activities. All too often, players aim for notes with their brains and willpower. With practice, you can train your body to respond in a reflexive manner to where that note lives and what it “tastes” like. This can practically guarantee accuracy!

### Note Tasting

♩ = 60



Continue upward as far as is comfortable...

\*Use the Pedal #F as a recovery from fatigued chops.

### Variations:

- 1) Breathe attack, mouthpiece stays on chops during rests
- 2) Tongue attack, mouthpiece stays on chops during rests
- 3) Breath attack, remove mouthpiece from chops during rests
- 4) Tongue attack, remove mouthpiece from chops during rests

**The Recovery:** Set up one measure of subdivided time. Ghost a “G” (measure 1) by blowing air through the instrument while almost playing note. Subdivide third beat and gently bring in ghosted note. Leave chops in place while inhaling for the next note.



Pick notes based on ease (ex. middle C, E, G).

## VIII. DYNAMIC STUDIES

### Crescendo Diminuendo

$\text{♩} = 60$

Keep the mouthpiece in contact with the lips throughout. The speed of the air determines the volume. Increase the airspeed to play louder; decrease the airspeed to play softer. Tap your foot to establish time, and subdivide during the rests.

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each containing two measures. The first measure of each staff starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a crescendo hairpin leading to a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic. The second measure starts with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic and a diminuendo hairpin leading back to a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing up, and rests are quarter rests.

If you feel tired after the dynamic study, play a few pedal F#s:

A single staff of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time. It contains three measures, each with a half note F# (pedal point) marked with a fermata. The first measure is marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic.