

LIP EXERCISES

By Brian D. Yates

Aside from finding a really attractive face off of which one can do some lip push ups, I was given some really great bocal muscle exercises by a fellow teacher (sax) at Exeter. There are two and they are as follows:

THE SMILE WHISTLE:

1. Smile very broadly and tighten the muscles of the corners of your mouth for a few seconds then...
2. Pucker your lips very tightly and whistle (or pretend to if you can't)
3. Do this 25 times - that's one rep. Do three reps (total of 75) in the morning, afternoon, and at night. If you can't manage 25 per rep in the first go 'round, start with 10 or 15 and work your way up.

THE LIP PRESS: (it's not what you think -- shucks)

1. Press your lips together in a flat even line as if you were angry at someone. Keep your jaw muscles relaxed, don't clench your teeth.
2. Hold that position for 10 seconds.
3. Relax for 5 sec.
4. Repeat. Do the press 10 times, that's one rep. As above, do three reps each in morn, afternoon, and night.

Again, if you can't start with ten, lower the number and work your way up. These are serious exercises and they really work. For the first week or two though, you won't be able to play too long before your lips just die. But after a while you'll be amazed at how much longer your pucker lasts. (Your piping widow spouse-girlfriend-boyfriend-coviviant-lover-significant other may also take a greater interest in your learning this instrument but I take no responsibility if your love life does not improve. At least your blowing will.) I didn't just say that.

Doing these exercises in the AM and at night is easy, you can do them in the shower or right when you go to bed. Mid-day is a bit tough to do without having the world think you're crazy - I usually do them when I'm driving.

If someone passes me though, I switch from the smile/whistle to the lip press. That's the normal facial expression when driving in Boston anyway! *;-)

"You know how to whistle, dont' you? Just put your lips together and blow."