

Guidelines for Tuning the Horn

Here is a step-by-step procedure for tuning the double horn.

This method of tuning should work for any horn, regardless of the manufacturer. This will allow your players the ability to more easily play in all keys without the need to "lip" notes in tune. This will allow for a more centered, even tone throughout the range of the instrument without the fatigue caused by bending out-of-tune notes in-tune. Accuracy may also be improved as poor intonation can be a factor with regard to "cracked" or "chipped" notes.

Start with the B flat side of the horn (with the trigger). (Also the tuning process for a single B flat horn.)

1. Tune the open notes (T-0). G at the top of the staff, top line F, and third space C are relatively stable notes in the harmonic series and are the best place to begin. (The third space C is sharp on most horns and should be left slightly sharp. This C should not be the primary tuning note, but one of several). Make any adjustments by moving the main tuning slide of the instrument.

2. Tune the second valve (T-2). Use top line F sharp and fourth space E. Make any adjustments by moving the second valve B flat slide (the "bottom" of the two second valve slides). Make sure you hold your trigger down as well when moving any of the B flat valve slides.

3. Tune the first valve (T-1). Use top space E flat and third line B flat. Make any adjustments by moving the first valve B flat slide (the "bottom" of the two first valve slides).

4. Tune the first and second valve combination (T-1-2). Use fourth line D and second space A. Make any adjustments by moving BOTH the first AND second valve B flat slides slightly. You must compromise--you will not be able to get the fingerings (T-1-2), (T-1), and (T-2) perfectly in tune. Get (T-1-2) as close to in-tune as you possibly without making (T-1) and (T-2) too out-of-tune. It is best to avoid being sharp on (T-1-2).

5. Tune the second and third valve combination (T-2-3). Use third space C sharp and second line G sharp. Make any adjustments by moving ONLY the third valve B flat slide.

6. As a final check of the B flat horn tuning, play a chromatic scale beginning on second line G sharp to high C (if possible). If tuning a single B flat horn, check the final tuning by playing a chromatic scale throughout the range of the instrument.

Now go to the F side of the horn (no trigger). (Also the tuning process for a single F horn.)

1. Tune the open notes (0). Use third space C, second line G, and middle C. DO NOT move the main tuning slide unless you are tuning a single F horn. On the double horn, make any adjustment using the "F" tuning slide. Find the slide that you think is the "F" slide and take it out. If you can play a note using the trigger, but not without the trigger, then you have found the "F" tuning slide.

2. Tune the second valve (2). Use third line B, first space F sharp, and B just below middle C. Make any adjustments by moving the second valve F slide (the "top" of the two second valve slides). Make sure you hold the valves down when moving the valve slides.

3. Tune the first valve (1). Use third line B flat, first space F, and B flat just below middle C. Make any adjustments by moving the first valve F slide (the "top" of the two first valve slides).

4. Tune the first and second valve combination (1-2). Use second space A, middle C sharp, and A just below middle C. Make any by adjustments moving BOTH the first AND second valve F slides slightly. You must compromise--you will not be able to get the fingerings (1-2), (1), and (2) perfectly in tune. Get (1-2) as close to in-tune as you possibly without making (1) and (2) too out-of-tune. It is best to avoid being sharp on (1-2).

5. Tune the second and third valve combination (2-3). Use second space A flat and A flat just below middle C. Make any adjustments by moving ONLY the third valve F slide.

6. Whether tuning the double horn or the single F horn, double check the tuning by playing a chromatic scale throughout the range of the instrument. The horn is now in tune. With a pencil, mark directly on the tuning slides their precise location. Now, to tune with other musicians, just move your main tuning slide.