

Tuba



# Flex On The Move

*A fun and creative approach to developing flexibility on  
any brass instrument.*

By Eric Bolvin



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# **Flex On the Move**

By  
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## **Introduction**

There are many great books on flexibility (or “lip flexibility” as it is commonly called) available to today’s brass players. The commonly used books include Irons 27 Groups, Smith Lip Flexibilities and Colin Advanced Lip Flexibilities. Flexibility studies do go all the way back to Arban and St, Jacome, but became a staple of brass pedagogy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century through teachers and authors like Del Staigers, Herbert L. Clarke, Earl D. Irons and Walter M. Smith.

There are different categories of flexibility exercises. There is “Long Flexibility” like those found in Colin’s Vol. I of Advanced Lip Flexibilities. With Long Flexibility you stay on one fingering and play a long line that takes you through a large range. Then, there is “Short Flexibility” similar to what is found in Irons and Smith where you play a repeated pattern on one fingering. Most flexibility falls into the Short Flexibility category. With this book, I would like to add “Moving Flexibility” to the list. With Moving Flexibility you play a short pattern that takes you up and down through all the fingerings, covering a large range on your instrument. The idea of Moving Flexibility was first introduced in Arban p. 45 #16 and later in Charles Colin, 100 Original Warm-Ups.

## **Why Practice Flexibility?**

Chances are, you’re not going to stand in front of an audience and perform flexibility studies. Flexibility studies are a means to an end, not the end. Most trumpet players practice some form of flexibility every day as it improves overall technique and gets you ready to play music. In our lessons, Claude Gordon would tell me how a particular exercise or routine he was writing would “get me feelin’ good.” So, that is my goal with these studies, to get you “feelin’ good”.

## **Technique**

There are many beliefs among players as to what makes a brass instrument “work”. Some believe it’s the lip, some believe it’s the tongue, some believe it’s the air, or some (like me) believe it’s a balance or coordination of all three. I don’t think that your chosen methodology will matter when practicing these exercises. If you practice them religiously and correctly, you’re playing will certainly improve.

## **Things To Watch For**

Excess movement and excess pressure are the enemies of the brass player. John Daniel is an excellent trumpet player and teacher and he says “We learn how to play high by using pressure and play low by dropping our jaw. Then we spend our life unlearning these habits.”

Of course there is movement and pressure involved in playing trumpet, but it's the excess that we should identify and eliminate. Try playing Exercise 1A very slowly. See if you can move to the low note with little or no jaw movement. Imagine you are “staying up” on the G. Slur to the low C and then come back to the G. Repeat this a few times until the low note sounds centered. The first and third notes should feel and sound the same and there should be very little movement of the jaw to get the low note. This little exercise will help you determine if you have excess jaw movement. Then continue with Exercise 1A and try to maintain that feeling. Remember though, that we are not trying to play without movement, just eliminate the excess.

## **Missing A High Note And Pressure**

If we initially don't make it to a high note, our instinct causes us to use pressure to get that note. Try to avoid doing this when practicing these exercises. If you miss a high note; stop, take a breath and start a bar or two back. This will help break the habit of using excess pressure to get the high note.

## **Glissandos**

Glissandos are an excellent way to get the coordination of air, tongue level and chops working. The idea is to hit all the harmonics smoothly on the way up and down without “stopping” or trying to center in on them. Watch the video for a demonstration of the glissando.

## **How To Use This Book**

"Flex On The Move" is presented in sections (1-6) and tracks (A-H). This is to help us better organize our practice routines. The sections are progressive in that each one adds a harmonic to the top of the range and are labeled as such. It is best to begin with either Section 1 or Section 2. Why begin with Section 2? Because Section 2 doesn't use the lowest harmonic which can cause you to play with excess movement. The notes are “closer together” in Section 2 than in Section 1 which can cut down on excessive movement. So if Section 2 is easier than Section 1, start with Section 1.

All exercises in this book are slurred. If you want to employ other models, you may, but I suggest working through the book with just slurring first, and then, if you want to play through it a second time, you may use other models like tonguing and mixing tonguing and slurring.

With every exercise in the book, whenever you change fingerings, it will always be either a half-step up or down. This keeps things close together, but enables you to cover a large range over the course of any one exercise. Always start slowly with a new exercise until you can hear the pattern. Then gradually speed up. Once you've got a good handle on the exercise you can start using a metronome. Start at a slow comfortable speed and notch it up when you are comfortable.

## Description and Organization of Exercises

**Section 1-Exercises 1A-8H.** These exercises include the notes Low Bb, G and Bb. Note that no exercise starts on low Bb because starting on the low note tends to get you “stuck” down there, especially if you use excess movement.

Exercises 1A and 3C are simple four-note patterns that are inversions of each other. Try to play at least two times in one breath.

Exercises 2B and 6F are back and forth type patterns that will help with lip trilling.

Exercises 4D and 6F both use triplets and can be played two or more times in one breath when you get the speed up.

Exercises 5E and 8H begin use the trilling idea combined with a four note group. You can really get some speed going on these and they will get you feeling good.

Exercises 7G and 8H are the only ones that employ intervals that “skip” a harmonic. 8H can be felt as eighth notes in 6 or triplets in 4. Try both to see what feels better for you.

**Section 2A-Exercises 9A-16H.** These exercises include the notes F, Bb and D. Note that there is no Low Bb in any of these exercises. This is because the low note will cause excess movement in many players. For this reason, you may want to start with the exercises in this section and then proceed to Section 1.

Exercises 9A and 11C are simple four-note patterns that are inversions of each other. Try to play at least two times in one breath.

Exercises 10B and 14F are back and forth type patterns that will help with lip trilling.

Exercises 12D and 14F both use triplets and can be played two or more times in one breath when you get the speed up.

Exercises 13E and 16H begin use the trilling idea combined with a four note group. You can really get some speed going on these and they will get you feeling good.

Exercises 15G and 16H are the only ones that employ intervals that “skip” a harmonic. 16H can be felt as eighth notes in 6 or triplets in 4. Try both to see what feels better for you.

**Section 2B-Exercises 17A-20H.** These exercises include low Bb, F, Bb and D. They are extensions of the exercises in the A, D, E and H tracks.

**Section 3A-Exercises 21A-28H.** The descriptions of the individual exercises in this section are similar to those in Sections 1 and 2A. The exercises in this section add the F above the staff. None of the exercises use the low Bb (see above).

**Section 3B-Exercises 29A-32H.** These exercises include low Bb, F, Bb, D and F. They are extensions of the exercises in the A, D, E and H tracks.

**Section 4A-Exercises 33A-40H.** These exercises extend the range to b7 harmonic. Note that this note is often flat on most brass instruments. The descriptions of the individual exercises in this section are similar to those in Sections 1 and 2A. None of the exercises use the low Bb (see above).

**Section 4B-Exercises 41A-44H.** These exercises include low Bb, F, Bb, D, G and Ab. They are extensions of the exercises in the A, D, E and H tracks.

**Section 5A-Exercises 45A-52H.** These exercises extend the range to high Bb. The descriptions of the individual exercises in this section are similar to those in Sections 1 and 2A. None of the exercises use the low Bb (see above).

**Section 5B-Exercises 53A-56H.** These exercises include low Bb, F, Bb, D, F, Ab and high Bb. They are extensions of the exercises in the A, D, E and H tracks.

**Section 6A-Exercises 57A-64H.** These exercises extend the range to C above high Bb. The descriptions of the individual exercises in this section are similar to those in Sections 1 and 2A. None of the exercises use the low Bb (see above).

**Section 6B-Exercises 65A-68H.** These exercises include low Bb, F, Bb, D, F, Ab, high Bb and C. They are extensions of the exercises in the A, D, E and H tracks.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 69I-70J.** Octave glissando covering a range from low B to F above the staff.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 71I-72J.** Minor 7<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from E to Ab above the staff.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 73I-74J.** Octave glissando covering a range from E to high Bb. Note the low E at the end.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 75I-76J.** Two-octave glissando covering a range from low E to high Bb.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 77I-78J.** Major 9<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from E to C above high Bb. Note the low E at the end.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 79I-80J.** Major 16<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from low E to C above high Bb.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 81I-82J.** Major 10<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from E to D above high Bb. Note the low E at the end.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 83I-84J.** Major 17<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from low E to D above high Bb.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 85I-86J.** Major 12<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from E to F above high Bb. Note the low E at the end.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 87I-88J.** Major 19<sup>th</sup> glissando covering a range from low E to F above high Bb.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 89I-90J.** Two-octave glissando covering a range from E to double high Bb. Note the low E at the end.

**Section 7-Glissando Exercises 91I-92J.** Two-octave glissando covering a range from low E to double high Bb.

**Track A.** Track A begins as a four-note pattern that is reversed when you change fingerings.

**Track B.** Track B is a back and forth type pattern.

**Track C.** Track C begins as a four-note pattern that is reversed when you change fingerings.

**Track D.** Track D is a progressive triplet figure.

**Track E.** Track E begins as a six-note pattern that covers at least an octave.

**Track F.** Track F is a triplet lip trill pattern.

**Track G.** Track G skips a harmonic in the pattern.

**Track H.** Track H skips a harmonic in the pattern.

**Track I.** Glissando Track I introduces each interval in a repetitive pattern.

**Track J.** Glissando Track J uses the interval presented in the previous Track I exercise through all the fingerings.

## Suggested Practice Routines

Here are some suggested practice routines for using "Flex On The Move". It is recommended that you stay on each lesson for two weeks.

### Progressive Track Routine

**Lesson 1** - Exercises 1A, 2B, 3C, 4D

**Lesson 2** - Exercises 5E, 6F, 7G, 8H

Completed Section 1

**Lesson 3** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 2B, 10B,

**Lesson 4** - Exercises 3C, 11C, 4D, 12D

**Lesson 5** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 6F, 14F

**Lesson 6** - Exercises 7G, 15G, 8H, 16H

Completed Section 2A

**Lesson 7** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 4D, 12D, 18D

**Lesson 8** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 8H, 16H, 20H

Completed Section 2B

**Lesson 9** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A

**Lesson 10** - Exercises 2B, 10B, 22B, 3C, 11C, 23C

**Lesson 11** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D

**Lesson 12** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E

**Lesson 13** - Exercises 6F, 14F, 26F, 7G, 15G, 27G

**Lesson 14** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H

Completed Section 3A

**Lesson 15** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A

**Lesson 16** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D

**Lesson 17** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E

**Lesson 18** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H

Completed Section 3B

**Lesson 19** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 33A

**Lesson 20** - Exercises 2B, 10B, 22B, 34B

**Lesson 21** - Exercises 3C, 11C, 23C, 35C

**Lesson 22** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 36D

**Lesson 23** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 37E

**Lesson 24** - Exercises 6F, 14F, 26F, 38F

**Lesson 25** - Exercises 7G, 15G, 27G, 39G

**Lesson 26** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 40H

Completed Section 4A

**Lesson 27** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 41A

**Lesson 28** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 42D

**Lesson 29** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 43E

**Lesson 30** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 44H

Completed Section 4B



**Lesson 31** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 41A, 45A  
**Lesson 32** - Exercises 2B, 10B, 22B, 34B, 46B  
**Lesson 33** - Exercises 3C, 11C, 23C, 35C, 47C  
**Lesson 34** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 36D, 48D  
**Lesson 35** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 37E, 49E  
**Lesson 36** - Exercises 6F, 14F, 26F, 38F, 50F  
**Lesson 37** - Exercises 7G, 15G, 27G, 39G, 51G  
**Lesson 38** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 44H, 52H  
Completed Section 5A

**Lesson 40** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 41A, 45A, 53A  
**Lesson 41** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 36D, 48D, 54D  
**Lesson 42** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 37E, 49E, 55D  
**Lesson 43** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 44H, 52H, 56H  
Completed Section 5B

**Lesson 44** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 41A, 45A, 53A, 57A  
**Lesson 45** - Exercises 2B, 10B, 22B, 34B, 46B, 58B  
**Lesson 46** - Exercises 3C, 11C, 23C, 35C, 47C, 59C  
**Lesson 47** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 36D, 48D, 54D, 60D  
**Lesson 48** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 37E, 49E, 55D, 61E  
**Lesson 49** - Exercises 6F, 14F, 26F, 38F, 50F, 62F  
**Lesson 50** - Exercises 7G, 15G, 27G, 39G, 51G, 63G  
**Lesson 51** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 44H, 52H, 56H, 64H  
Completed Section 6A

**Lesson 52** - Exercises 1A, 9A, 17A, 21A, 29A, 41A, 45A, 53A, 57A, 65A  
**Lesson 53** - Exercises 4D, 12D, 18D, 24D, 30D, 36D, 48D, 54D, 60D, 66D  
**Lesson 54** - Exercises 5E, 13E, 19E, 25E, 31E, 37E, 49E, 55D, 61E, 67E  
**Lesson 55** - Exercises 8H, 16H, 20H, 28H, 32H, 44H, 52H, 56H, 64H, 68H  
Completed Section 6B

## **Progressive Glissando Routine**

May be used alone or in conjunction with any of the track lessons.

**Lesson 1** - Exercises 69I, 70J, 71I, 72J  
**Lesson 2** - Exercises 69I, 70J, 71I, 72J, 73I, 74J  
**Lesson 3** - Exercises 69I, 70J, 71I, 72J, 73I, 74J, 75I, 76J  
**Lesson 4** - Exercises 69I, 70J, 73I, 74J, 75I, 76J, 77I, 78J  
**Lesson 5** - Exercises 73I, 74J, 75I, 76J, 77I, 78J, 79I, 80J  
**Lesson 6** - Exercises 73I, 74J, 77I, 78J, 79I, 80J, 81I, 82J  
**Lesson 7** - Exercises 75I, 76J, 79I, 80J, 81I, 82J, 83I, 84J  
**Lesson 8** - Exercises 75I, 76J, 81I, 82J, 83I, 84J, 85I, 86J  
**Lesson 9** - Exercises 75I, 76J, 79I, 80J, 83I, 84J, 87I, 88J  
**Lesson 10** - Exercises 73I, 74J, 77I, 78J, 81I, 82J, 85I, 86J, 89I, 90J  
**Lesson 11** - Exercises 75I, 76J, 79I, 80J, 83I, 84J, 87I, 88J, 91I, 92J

# Flex On the Move

Eric Bolvin

## Section 1-To Bb

All exercises slurred

All 13=4. All 123=24

1A

0- 2- 1- 12- 23b 13- 123- 13-

23- 12- 1- 2-

2B

0- 2- 1- 12-

23- 13- 123- 13-

23- 12- 1- 2-

3C

0- 2- 1- 12- 23- 13-

123- 13- 23- 12- 1- 2-

4D

0- 2- 1- 12- 23b 13-

123- 13- 23- 12- 1- 2-

# Section 4B- From Low Bb To Ab

All exercises slurred

41A

0- 2- 1- 12- 23- 123- 12- 1- 2-

(2X)

42D

0- 2- 12- 23- 13- 123- 13- 23- 12- 1- 2-

(2X)

43E

0- 2- 1- 12- 23- 13- 123- 13- 23- 12- 1- 2-

(2X)