

Trombone Slide Technique

Some ideas from Dan Cherry, Western Carolina University
<http://paws.wcu.edu/dcherry/>

Left vs. Right Arms:

- Left arm supports the weight of the instrument ↑
- Right arm holds NO weight, only moves the slide ↔
 - If done correctly, this will result in a straight in and out slide motion with NO CURVES

Right Hand Grip:

- Hold the slide lightly but securely between the thumb and 2 fingers
- Keep your thumb attached to the brace; NO throw and catch!
 - You may need to “trade” the thumb for your ring finger when moving out to 7th position
- Avoid gripping the actual slide; this tempts you to eliminate wrist motion and hold some weight in your slide arm
- There is no need to touch the bell – *break this habit!*

4 Arm Joints Control Slide Motion:

- Wrist
- Elbow
- Shoulder
- *Shoulder 2 (where the collarbone meets the sternum)
 - You can help to engage this joint by standing “next to” rather than “behind” your trombone

Slide Technique:

- Your right arm motion needs to be quick and precise, yet relaxed
- The slide should pause in the position for each note you play
 - The *only* exception will be in extremely fast staccato passages
- Move the slide *in rhythm* at the start of the next note
- Most of the work happens in your elbow and shoulder, only a small amount in your wrist
 - Treat the wrist like a hinge that snaps the slide into position

Alternate Positions:

- Learn to master your alternate positions: this gives you more options
- Always try a teacher’s or editor’s suggested alternates – they’re made for a reason
- Also feel free to ignore those suggestions if a different combination of positions works better for you
- I use alternates primarily to create or avoid slurs, not for slide direction or distance

Intonation:

- Trombone intonation is directly affected by slide technique
- Be aware of your direction tendencies ↔
- Watch out for the *Danger Zone!* (4th, 5th and 6th positions)