

## The Trumpet Wheel

*"It's not just about playing the right notes"*

Learning to play the trumpet well certainly involves practice, but practice strategy is often overlooked. An efficient approach to practice is not just repeating songs until you get the notes right, but focusing your efforts on improving specific skills. The **Trumpet Wheel** serves as a performance profile, helping students evaluate their performance and identify areas needing work.

Most beginning trumpet players take a robotic approach their practice, repeating songs over and over, focusing only on trying to play all the right notes. Since reading is a skill, that approach isn't completely out of line, but young players will often score themselves "100%" if they played a song without missing a note.

The **Trumpet Wheel** identifies six skill areas that even the most advanced trumpet players work to improve and maintain. A player's view of their ability in these areas can be subjective, but some individual skills can be objectively measured (i.e., speed on a fingering exercise).

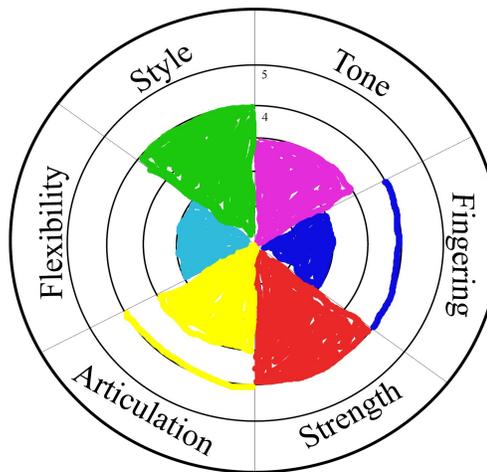
Feel free to modify and create your own customized version of the **Trumpet Wheel** to help assess your progress in specific areas.

Use the **Trumpet Wheel** to:

- understand the key elements of trumpet performance
- identify relative areas of strengths and weaknesses
- set targets and objectives

### Instructions:

- On a 1-5 scale, rate your current ability on each of the performance areas.
- Color each skill section to reflect your assessment (the closer to the edge, or '5', the better your ability)
- Use a single colored line to indicate your goal in a particular skill.
- Direct practice efforts toward improving goal areas.



### Notes:

- The **Trumpet Wheel** is relative. A '5' for you may not be Wynton Marsalis level, it may be the first chair in community band level.
- Honesty is important. Don't be ridiculously critical, but don't exaggerate your abilities either.
- Don't rely on your perception as you play. Listen to a recording of yourself to help make an accurate assessment.
- Ask someone else – ideally a teacher - to listen to the same recording and complete the profile. There will be differences, but hopefully assessments of the various skills will be similar in relation to each other.
- Revisit the **Trumpet Wheel** every few weeks to review progress.

# The Trumpet Wheel

Skill	Elements	Goals	Notes
<b>Tone</b>	Best clear, open, air-supported sound on long tones.		
<b>Fingering</b>	Evenness at goal tempo.		
<b>Strength</b>	Endurance and range. Relative to performance requirements.		
<b>Articulation</b>	Clean attacks on phrases and single notes. Varying speeds and articulation styles.		
<b>Flexibility</b>	Speed and accuracy of slurring exercises and phrases.		
<b>Style</b>	Appropriate use of dynamics, tempo changes, and phrasing. May differ between solo and section playing.		

