



Trumpet Rules of Thumb  
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### **Embouchure**

The higher we play, the smaller the aperture.  
The lower we play, the larger the aperture.  
The louder we play, the larger the aperture.  
The softer we play, the smaller the aperture.  
The higher we play, the more mouthpiece pressure we tend to use.  
The lower we play, the less mouthpiece pressure we tend to use.

### **Dynamics**

The louder we play, the flatter we tend to play (see above... larger aperture)  
The softer we play, the sharper we tend to play (see above... smaller aperture)  
The louder we play, the faster we tend to play  
The softer we play, the slower we tend to play

### **Intonation**

A hot instrument plays sharp, a cold instrument plays flat.  
The fifth partial is not flat, but it sounds flat compared to equal temperament.  
Many trumpet manufactures intentionally make the 1<sup>st</sup> valve slide “too short” to compensate for the 5<sup>th</sup> partial “D” which sounds flat—but the result is notes that use the 1<sup>st</sup> valve, including D, can be sharp.

### **Tempo**

See above -- We tend to play faster when loud and softer when quiet  
We tend to rush at the end of our breath supply  
When choosing your tempo: Take fast pieces a bit slowly; take slow pieces a bit quickly

### **Endurance**

Endurance is like a budget; how much does it ‘cost’ you for each note you play?  
Players who use more mouthpiece pressure or physical tension when they get tired, tend to go sharp.

### **Interpretation/Musicianship**

Charlie Geyer’s three clues to look for, to find the peak of a phrase: A high note, a strong beat, a dissonance.