

Using my lips to change the pitch

The image shows a musical exercise for trombone slide positions 1 through 7. It consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time, each starting with a treble clef. The notes are written as half notes with stems pointing down. The notes are grouped into three measures per slide position, with a double bar line and repeat sign after each group. The notes are: 1 (1st position): C, G, C; 2: B, F#, B; 3: Bb, F, Bb; 4: A, E, A; 5: Ab, Eb, Ab; 6: G, D, G; 7: F#, C#, F#.

1 (1st position) 2 3

4 5

6 7

C G C B F# B Bb F Bb

A E A Ab Eb Ab

G D G F# C# F#

We can play more than one note using each slide position that we use. The way we change between two notes is by using our lips to change the pitch of the note. You will also need to blow the air through the instrument a little faster when going for the higher pitches each time.

If you find it hard at first to get up to the G, that's no problem. Just start on a note later a little later on in the exercise, for instance an B, or Bb. As you practise this more, you will develop more flexibility in the lips and you will be able to move easier between notes.

Test yourself! How low can you go? Can you play the last phrase starting on low F#? This will be harder for trombonists so don't worry if you can't get to 7th position! Once you can play the exercise comfortably, try slurring the notes together or play the exercise going down as written and then coming back up to the top again in reverse order.