VALVE SLIDE CONVERSION RINGS- THE SOLUTION TO LOW D & C# INTONATION ADJUSTMENTS

An Alternate Fix for Low D and C#

We all know that low D and its neighboring C# are sharp and we all know that to play in tune, we are told to push either or both the third slide and or the first slide out in order to solve this intonation dilemma. At least we are supposed to. What if there was another less gymnastic way to correct the problem. But wait, someone has found a better way and due to the fact that I am responsible for this simple solution, I will tell you how it works.

Try this and let me know what you think. I have been using this easy solution now for a week in my own practice as well as some ensemble playing and will not go back to the old "push your third slide out on low D and C#" again.

If all of your slides are extended a proportionate distance, there is no need to push and pull your slides out to be in tune. I have found that if you extend each of your slides a proportionate distance you need only to lip a few notes up or down to play in tune. Here is how it's done…. Extend your second slide a distance about 1/16th of an inch. Extend your first slide about 1/8 of an inch and your third slide ¼ of an inch. Due to the fact that you have lowered your valve slide you will now need to compensate by bringing "in" your tuning slide approximately ½ inch. All of these changes are only approximate for each instrument and each player will affect the outcome.

After you have played with these changes, you will need to adjust each slide so that the intonation adjustments will be done by slight adjustment of the lip either up or down. The use of chromatic scale works well for the exercise. Notice especially when you play the following notes as chromatic pitches- low D, C#, D#. What you need to look for is an added pop of air as you pass these notes. The added air to the third slide will tell you if you have extended your third slide far enough. If you feel a "bump" in the air stream, extend your third slide a little farther, until this "bump" flattens out.

Extending your slides in this manner will lower your "valved" notes but will not affect your open tones and that is why you need to compensate by bringing in your tuning slide. What you are essentially doing is making all of your notes a little out of tune and by compensating with your lip, you will be able to bypass the drudgery of sliding valve slides in and out. Extending your valve slides bring up another issue which I will show you how to make this major change in your playing.

Valve slide conversion rings

Valve slide conversion rings can be used to accurately establish the amount of extension on each of your slides. I made the first set of rings from plastic PCV pipe as seen in the photo. Another material which will work is the plastic hose used in outside water features. Either will work and will take you a very little time to fabricate. The most important issue is to know the correct amount of extension your valves will need. The PVC tubing will take about ten minutes to fit on each valve slide and the plastic hose material will require much less time for you only need a good pair of scissors to accomplish you task.

Instruction for fabricating valve extension rings-

1. Acquire a small length of ½" CPI "CPVC HOT & Cold Blue Line" tubing or plastic hose material.
2. Cut the length required to compensate on all three valve slides.
3. Drill, sand and polish the inside of the tubing until it slides easily onto your valve slides.
4. Play for about a week and shorten the tubing if necessary to adjust the lengths to get the best results.
5. Don't forget to bring your tuning slide in about ½ inch also.

I no longer have to push and pull slides around in order to play in tune. With just the slightest lip change, I can play much more easily on my instrument. Try it and let me know how if it works for you.