

FAST TONGUING CONCEPTS

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1. **ESTABLISH CORRECT TONGUE PLACEMENT.** The tip of the tongue, about 1/8" back from the point, should touch the reed at the front of the bottom blade (not covering the opening). In double tonguing, the tip of the tongue moves the same way as in single tonguing, alternating with the middle of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth as if you were saying, "ticket-ticket-ticket".
2. **USE A STEADY, SUPPORTED, AND RELAXED AIRSTREAM.**
3. **MINIMIZE MOTION.** Only the tip of the tongue should move, (as well as the middle of the tongue in double tonguing) while the sides rest on the upper teeth. The air should be the activating force behind the tongue. The tongue should be relaxed and feel like a flag flapping in the wind. Watch yourself in the mirror and make sure your jaw and lips do not move while tonguing.
4. **KEEP THE NOTES CONNECTED.** Double tonguing is a *legato* tongue. Keep the air flowing so that there is no space between the notes, just definition.
5. **PERSISTENCE AND PATIENCE IN PRACTICING.** Practice fast tonguing every day, but only for a few minutes to avoid fatigue. Set small short term goals for the speed, and realize that the long-term goals might take years. Practice double tonguing *VERY SLOWLY* for a *VERY LONG TIME*. Keep it slow enough so that it is clean and even *ALL THE TIME*.
6. **PRACTICE AWAY FROM THE INSTRUMENT.** Using just air and tongue, whisper, "Too-too-too-too..." or, "Too-koo-too-koo-too-koo".
7. **EXPERIMENT WITH SYLLABLES.** For many players, a "d" consonant works better than "t", and a "g" might work better than a "k". The vowel formation varies from the short "i" in "ticket", to the "u" sound in "turkey", to the "o" sound in "toe" to something in between.
8. **TRIPLETS.** For triple tonguing, I choose to keep alternating front and back strokes, just changing the metric emphasis (TKT KTK). Some players prefer to always have a "T" stroke on the beat (TKT TKT or TTK TTK).