

Dr. Bradley Palmer  
Trombone Professor  
Columbus State University  
palmer\_bradley@columbusstate.edu

### **Tuning Chart Instructions**

The purpose of this chart is to learn your intonation tendencies and the tendencies of your instrument on every pitch in your range. The columns between “-20 and 20” are for simple check marks to reflect the position of the tuner when each note is played. The “alt” columns on the right are for checking alternate positions (or valves) and should contain a number of cents sharp or flat (-10 or +15 for example).

How to use the chart:

1. This chart is to be done with two people: one playing without looking at the tuner, and one looking at the tuner and writing on the chart.
2. Make sure you are warmed up, and that your horn is at its normal playing temperature (warm)
3. Start with your tuning Bb, and play right through the center of the horn. Try lipping it up and down a bit to find the center. Make sure you play with a FULL sound.
4. When your tuning Bb is in tune, begin to chart the rest of the pitches, working downward chromatically as low as practical.
5. Re-tune the tuning Bb and begin going upward as high as practical.

When you are done:

1. Put the player’s name and the date at the top.
2. Carefully review the chart.
3. Take note of the pitches that you were most out of tune on. Any pitch more than 15-20 cents out of tune should be on your “code red” watch list. You should remember to adjust these pitches EVERY time you play one.
4. Look for trends. For example:
  - a. The lower I go, the flatter it gets
  - b. My 6<sup>th</sup> partial is usually sharp
  - c. My 4<sup>th</sup> position is usually too high
5. Switch roles so that the person charting the intonation becomes the player.
6. Consider doing the chart two or more times at different dynamic levels.
7. Do this chart again after a few weeks of working on your adjustments. Doing this entire process only takes a few minutes and should be done at least once a semester and any time you change equipment.