

downshire brass



Ten Top Tips

1. Show up...

...on time! A band is a team effort. Other people rely on your contribution, so your absence does not only affect you. If it is impossible for you to attend, please give as much notice as possible. It may well affect the preparation for the rehearsal.

2. Respect the Conductor

Players prepare for concerts and contests which occur only a few times per year. The conductor has to prepare for each and every rehearsal. Please let them know if you are not going to be there. When they announce the next piece to be rehearsed, find the music and place it on your stand as quickly as possible (with as little grumbling and groaning as possible). When the conductor speaks, listen. When they stop the band in the middle of a piece, don't continue to play.

3. Practice

Sometimes it can be frustrating to sit in a band practice and listen to someone being rehearsed on something that they were individually rehearsed on last week and the week before that and the week before that. Even if you can't take the music home, you can practice exercises to improve your lip stamina, range, tone, reading, speed of fingers (or slide) and so on.

4. Pay Attention

If other players are being rehearsed, please don't talk or look around. Follow your part, rehearse it without playing your instrument. When you are playing remember to give the notes their full value. Look at the markings, dynamics, repeats, solos, mutes in indications and so on. Look through the music and understand its geography. Check your key signature and time signature and know where they change. Pay special attention to those awkward twiddled bits!

5. Be Equipped

Make sure your instrument is always playable and presentable. Carry valve oil (or slide grease) and a polishing cloth. Protect your music from damage and carry any stands, mutes etc. you require. Most importantly, take a pencil to rehearsal!

6. Lend a Hand

Don't be shy about lending a hand when there's work to be done like setting up for band, clearing up after rehearsals, helping move percussion, tidying the library or store and any other duties which keep the band running smoothly. This is a collective team effort and everyone gains when we share the load.

7. Switch Off

It's great to feel needed by your friends and family, but the band hall is not the right place for texting, phone calls or social media exchanges. Everyone understands that there will be domestic or work-related emergencies and for those occasions you should keep your phone at hand. In all cases please set your phone to silent and out of sight as soon as you arrive at a rehearsal.

8. Sit Up

Playing a brass instrument can often be a difficult activity at the best of times, so make your life a bit easier by adopting a good posture while you play. If you can avoid slouching, leaning and crossing your legs, you might start to notice a better sound coming out the bell of your instrument!

9. Be a Pro

The word 'amateur' can be a bad word or an insult for some, but the word actually comes from the French term meaning 'lover of'. Do yourself and the band justice by approaching all aspects of your playing in a professional way. By behaving and playing in a professional manner we can be true 'amateurs' of brass banding and Downshire Brass.

10. Enjoy!

Everyone who walks in through the door of the band hall is coming to share in and enjoy the music of our band, so follow these Ten Top Tips and enjoy the rollercoaster ride that is being a member of Downshire Brass!