

FINGER

B U S T E R S



DAN FORSHAW THE SAX COACH

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So many 'mistakes' by aspiring saxophonists come from poor fingering technique, we just can't get our fingers in the right place at the right time! These ten exercises are building on my second ebook, *Nail Your Scales* which is available from the Cambridge Saxophone website. ALL of these exercises need to be practiced with a metronome, I suggest starting at 60 bpm and then increasing by 10 bpm each time until you can comfortably play at 180 bpm or faster!

We start the book working on our weakest fingers, the pinky, or little finger. If you're right handed then your left hand pinky key will be a significant challenge, (and on the saxophone, it's the hardest set of notes), so spend some time getting these exercises right before moving on.

If you want some personal feedback on your playing then why not schedule a one to one coaching session with me via the [sax.coach](http://www.sax.coach) website?

Let's get to work...

Dan Forshaw
Cambridge, Spring 2022
www.sax.coach

'It's easy to play any musical instrument: all you have to do is touch the right key at the right time and the instrument will play itself...'

J.S. Bach

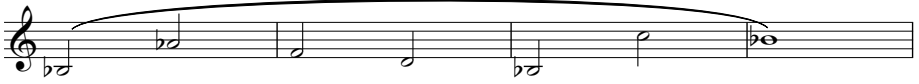
Finger Buster #1 Right Hand Pinky

Pinky Workout

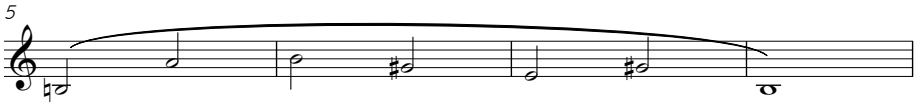


Finger Buster #2 Left Hand Pinky

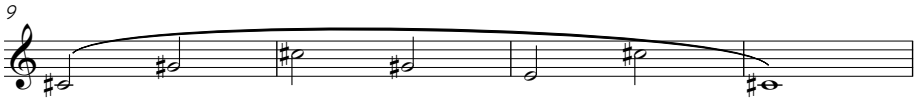
Keep Low Bb key depressed



Keep Low B natural key depressed



Keep Low C# key depressed



13 Keep the movement in the left hand to a minimum, let that pinky glide over the keys!



Finger Buster #3 Spoons Workout

'Spoons' Workout

Measure 1: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 2: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 3: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 4: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 5: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 6: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Measure 7: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 8: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 9: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Measure 10: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 11: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Measure 12: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 13: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Measure 14: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 15: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 16: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Measure 17: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.

Finger Buster #4 All Keys Work-Out

This is a really good workout in all 12 keys. Start your metronome at around 50 bpm and then turn it up. Send me a video when you can do it at 180 bpm!



Finger Buster #5 Minor 3rds

Getting to grips with the minor 3rd interval is one of the most important lessons when improvising in any style. Here are some great exercises to get those fingers moving and your ears listening. Try and move this concept away from the book, (not reading the exercises) starting on different notes if you can - fluency is key here.

Minor 3rds descending (up and up)

Use front Bb

etc

Minor 3rds descending (down and up)

etc

Minor 3rds descending (up and down)

etc

Minor 3rds ascending (up and up)

etc

Minor 3rds ascending (up and down)

etc

Minor 3rds ascending (down and up)

etc

25 Minor 3rds in Whole Steps (up and up)



29 Minor 3rds in Whole Steps (down and up)



33 Minor 3rds in Whole Steps (up and down)



Some further ideas on this concept.

1. Minor 3rds in tritones
2. Minor 3rds in 4ths
3. Tritones in Minor 3rds

If you really want to go to town, try experimenting with different rhythmic patterns on this exercise. Send me a video to hello@sax.coach when you do!

Finger Buster #6 Triad Explorations



Finger Buster #6 cont

2

33



37



41



45



49



53



57



61



65



Finger Buster #6 cont



Finger Buster #7

This exercise is a brilliant warmup for fingers, ears and intonation.

They also have a brilliant harmony 'hack' - two minor 7th intervals played a tritone apart (as in this exercise) create a Dom 7 chord with a flattened 5th - enjoy and work on speeding this up



Finger Buster #8

Many students just practice major and minor scales. To have fluency when you play, you need to know all seven modes that are commonly used in western music. Each bar descends a key signature (i.e F, Eb, Db, C, Bb, Ab, Gb)

1 2 3 4

Ionian Mode Dorian Mode Phrygian Mode Lydian Mode

5 6 7

Mixolydian Mode Aeolian Mode Locrian Mode

9 10 11 12

Ionian Mode Dorian Mode Phrygian Mode Lydian Mode

13 14 15

Mixolydian Mode Aeolian Mode Locrian Mode

17 18 19 20

Ionian Mode Dorian Mode Phrygian Mode Lydian Mode

21 22 23

Mixolydian Mode Aeolian Mode Locrian Mode

25 26 27 28

Ionian Mode Dorian Mode Phrygian Mode Lydian Mode

29 30 31

Mixolydian Mode Aeolian Mode Locrian Mode

Finger Buster #9 - Back to Bach

Everything in Western Music flows back to JS Bach - in this exercise I take a Bach-like melody, (with lots of leaps) to help you keep your fingers close to the sax.



The image shows a musical score for a saxophone exercise. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains the first four measures of the exercise, and the second staff contains the remaining four measures, starting with a measure number '5' above the first note. The music is written in treble clef and features a series of eighth-note patterns with various intervals and accidentals (flats, sharps, and naturals) that create a Bach-like melodic style. The notes are often beamed together in groups of two or four, with slurs indicating phrasing. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

If you enjoy this exercise then check out Trent Kynaston's transcriptions of J.S. Bach's six suites for 'cello (published by Advance Music)- I love working on them...

Finger Buster #10 Bb's

There are 4 ways to play Bb on the saxophone, (if you don't know, see the photos on the next pages or head to my YouTube channel and search 'Sax Coach 4 ways to play Bb').

On these exercises make sure you practice using each of the 4 fingerings, you will then know which is the most efficient one to use for each exercise. Repeat each bar at least 5 times and start your metronome at 60, increasing by ten bpm each cycle.



Finally, to really bust your Bb's practice your 'flat key' scales with the alternative fingerings. You can really go to town and change the Bb fingering each time you play a Bb - the goal here is to have the most convenient Bb fingering available when you need it most.



The Four Bb's

Bis key



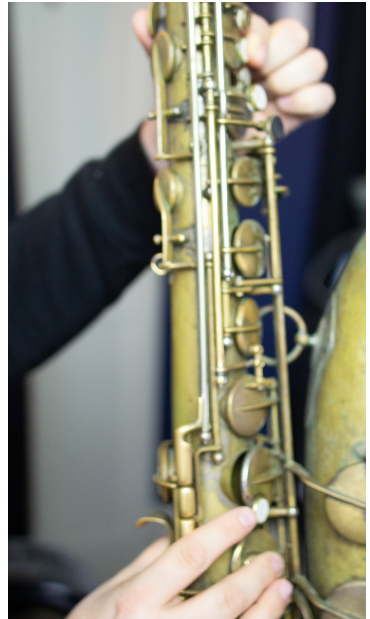
Side Key



'Front' Bb (1)



Front Bb (2)



About the Author



Dan Forshaw is a charismatic musician, music coach and YouTuber. He has performed and taught all over the world including as First Study Saxophone tutor for Cambridge University. An expert on the music of John Coltrane, Forshaw is founder of the award winning Cambridge Saxophone website and founder of Sax.Coach!

Find out more www.danforshaw.com