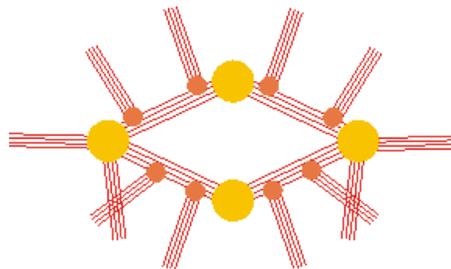


How wind musicians can strengthen their lip muscles

Dr. Wolfgang Kreitmair, 4i Services Berlin

There is a network of different muscles working together in order to prepare the background for playing a wind instrument:



This network is common to all wind instruments but depending on the specific type there might be additional muscles involved.

The muscles of the Orbicularis Oris (i.e. the four muscles in the center) are only fixed on other muscles, while the surrounding muscles are fixed on one end on bones and fixed on the other ends at the Orbicularis Oris muscles; therefore, these surrounding muscles are in permanent tension during playing the instrument (holding/fixing a certain position), while the Orbicularis Oris muscles are in dynamic movements (changing a setting either slow or fast).

In order to increase the basic strength of the muscles the best training is an „**intelligent**“ **combination of isometric/static and isotonic/dynamic training**, for example:

- start with isometric training
- continue with isotonic training
- and finish with isometric training.

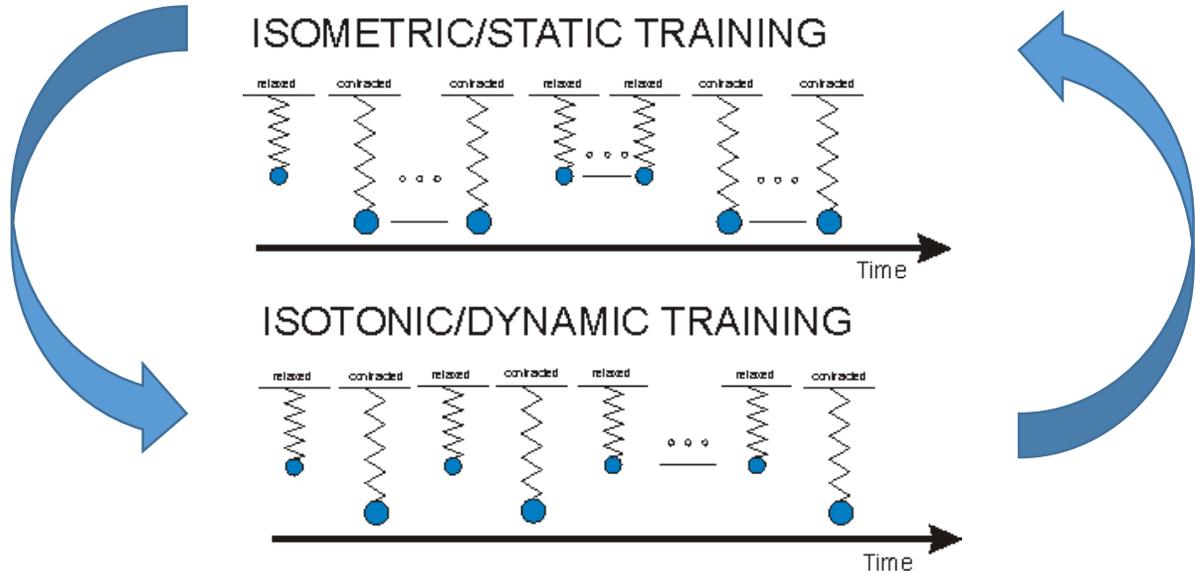
Isometric means: contract the muscles and hold the muscles contracted for a certain time, then relax the muscles; repeat this cycle a certain number of times (usually 5 to 10 times is sufficient);

Isotonic means: contract the muscles and relax the muscles without hold-on time; repeat this cycle a certain number of times (usually 20 to 30 times is sufficient).

(More details are given in my Pulse article:

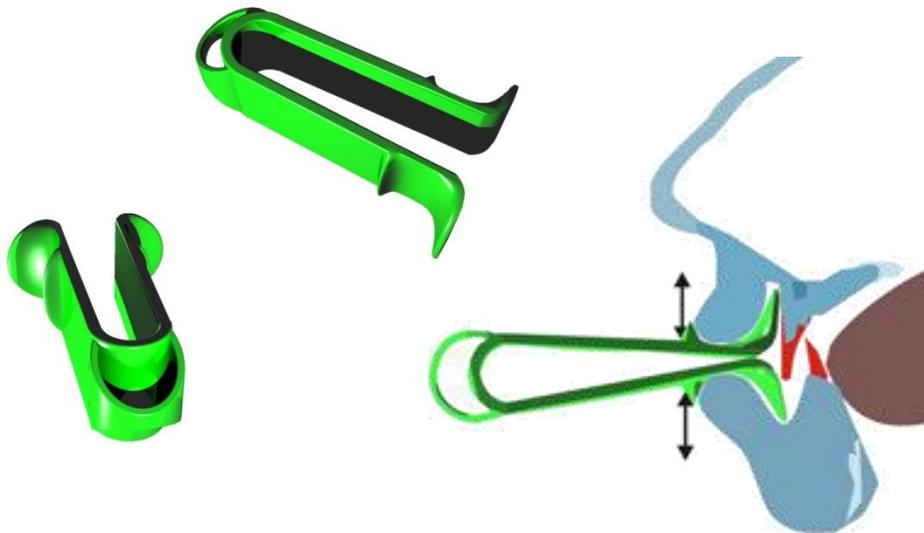
<http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-important-things-every-wind-musician-should-know-his-kreitmair>)

The lip training essentially is the same as the training in a gym – but since the lip muscles are more delicate, it needs much more care. Don't overdo you training!

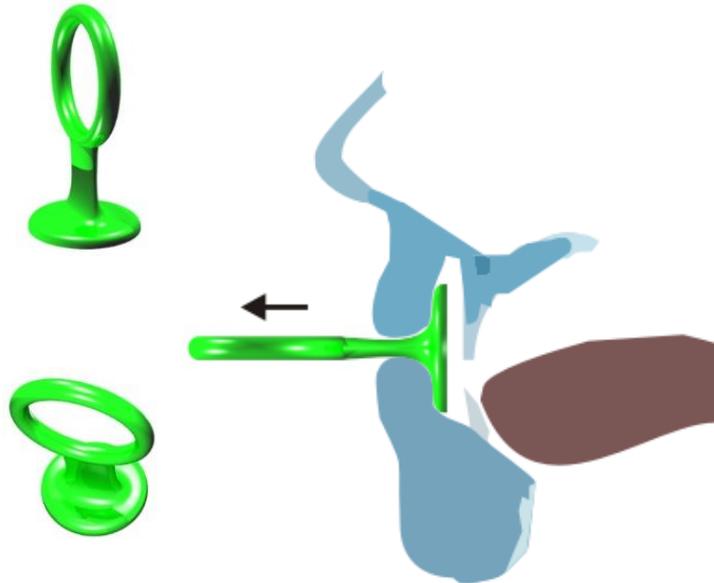


In order to support the two lip training types, 4i TECH has developed training aids which can be ordered at the online shop www.musicaccessorios.com under category "Training":

- ENDI – the dynamic lip trainer



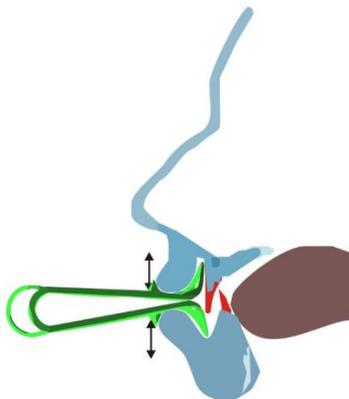
- ENIS – the isometric lip trainer



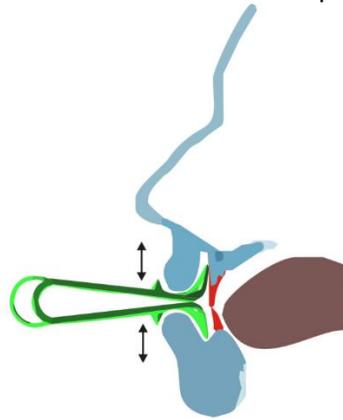
While the primary function of ENDI is dynamic training, it could also be used for an isometric kind of training. The same is true for ENIS who's primary function is isometric training: ENIS is designed in such a way that it can be used for dynamic training as well.

Like in a gym where you could work out your body with different degrees of difficulties, there are different levels of work outs for your lips as well. These levels are independent of the type of training and therefore **apply for isometric training as well as dynamic training.**

Basic level (level 1) of lip work out: Normal teeth position (lower teeth behind upper teeth)

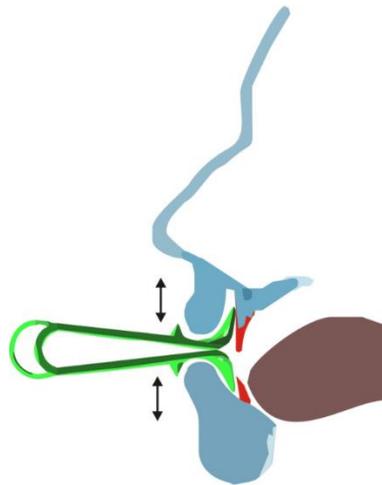


Advanced level (level 2) of lip work out: Lower teeth in contact position with upper teeth

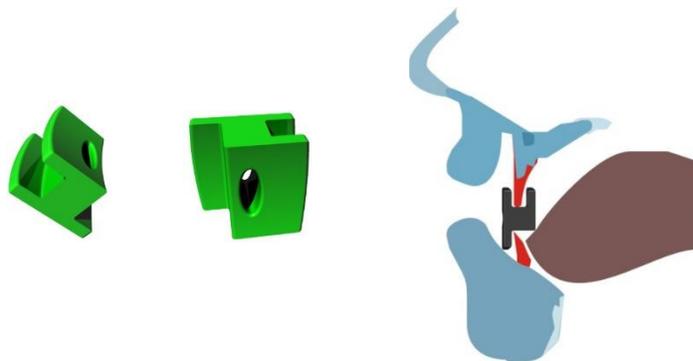


Performing the exercises in this position is more challenging and the setting is closer to the target position of the teeth.

Expert level (level 3) of lip work out: Lower teeth and upper teeth in the same plane but open, e.g. there is a space between upper and lower teeth. This is the typical teeth setting for playing a wind instrument.



Changing from the Advanced level to the Expert level is fairly difficult, therefore 4i TECH has invented a supporting device called SEPA, which helps keeping the teeth in distance:



Doing the exercises with the help of SEPA can be considered as an intermediate level between the Advanced and the Expert levels.

At the end of your exercises it is recommended to perform some dynamic stretching of the lip muscles (I will show more details about dynamic stretching of lip muscles in a separate article), or to enjoy some relaxation minutes using a vibration device like **myVIBS** from 4i TECH:

