

How to Practice

Tips for Efficient and Successful Practice

- **FIND A REGULAR PRACTICE TIME:** Try to practice at the same time every day so that it becomes a part of your routine (ex. always practice 15 minutes before dinner, or after your favorite tv show)
- **WORK ON DIFFICULT SECTIONS:** Don't waste time playing the entire piece every time you practice. Just focus on the sections that are difficult for you to save time.
- **SLOW PRACTICE:** Practicing difficult sections **SLOWLY** is key!! Once you can play a difficult section slowly, then try gradually speeding it up.
- **FRUSTRATION:** It is **NORMAL** to get frustrated during practice!!!! If you are having trouble with something, take a break and try it again tomorrow. Don't give up on it!
- **ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT:** No one is perfect and eventually, you will hit a roadblock. Everyone in the program should be seeking help at some point. In fact, I too ask other musicians for advice when I get stuck with technique or a tough section of music. Seeking out answers is the best way to get better at something.

Organizing your Practice Routine

1. Warm-Up

Always begin a practice session with some kind of warm-up. This is a time when we wake up our muscles and minds and practice basic techniques, such as dynamic control, breathing, articulations, quality of sound, etc. Students will learn many warm-ups in class and should focus on one or two warm-ups every time they practice. Always focus on producing the best, most beautiful quality of sound possible when warming up.

2. Skill Building Exercises

In class, we will focus on specific skills that need improving. For example, I might ask students to count their rhythms out loud, sing their part, say letter names of notes out loud, just practice the fingerings (without sound), etc. Students should practice any skill-building activities that we do in class at home.

3. Concert Music

Students should practice **ONLY** one or two small sections of music that are difficult for them (**NOT** the entire piece). Practicing **small sections SLOWLY** is the most effective way to get better at them.

4. FUN!!

End your practice session with something fun! Play your favorite piece. Try making up your own piece of music. Try to figure out a song you heard on the radio or on tv, etc. Don't forget that while learning an instrument takes a lot of work, it is also lots of FUN and a means of self-expression!