



Ballenas Music Department

Practice Tips

Every good musician knows that regular practice is a must, but did you know that improper practice can actually reduce your musical ability? Here's are some tips to ensure you get the most out of your practice time, enabling you to enjoy your music to the fullest!

Your practice involves your mind, your body, your emotions, and the music. You focus your mind and your feelings on the sounds you are producing, so that the music you play is beautiful and expressive.

Come to rehearsal prepared to **play** your part- not practice your part!

Practice should include:

- A warm-up: long tones for your tone quality, breathing, and embouchure.
- Articulation exercise to "warm up" your tonguing.
- Review of the scales in the key(s) of your repertoire. Also chromatic scales.
- Your assignment(s) to be mastered

Make practice a part of your daily routine. If you know you will practice at a certain time every day, it will happen with very few exceptions.

Try to find a quiet room where you can play without being disturbed or distracted.

How do I get the most out of my practice time?

This is a VERY good question! Many students practice by playing straight through a piece (often as quickly as possible), then go on to the next piece, no matter what happened. There is a better way to practice. Here are some hints for getting the most for your practice time.

- Be sure your instrument is in perfect working order. If not, tell someone and get it fixed.

- Don't look at the clock.
- Eliminate all distractions. Turn off your cell phone! Don't daydream. Focus completely on the task.
- Select a small musical passage as a goal for mastery to be accomplished in each practice session. It could be as little as eight bars.
- Practice without playing. Count it and push the buttons- hear it in your mind.
- Break the music down into small sections if required. (How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!)
- Practice it slowly at first. Increase the tempo only when you are able to play it. If you can't play it slowly, you can't play it fast.
- Repeat the passage many times AFTER you get it right. Play it while imagining you are on stage in a concert.
- You will likely find you have achieved mastery in a matter of a few minutes! Consider repeating the process with a few other passages before putting your instrument down.
- Complete your practice with a feeling of accomplishment.
- Practice can be gratifying when you see meaningful improvement. When that happens, it is much easier to pick up your instrument the next time you practice.

Consider adapting this practice method as a study skill to be applied to homework/exam preparation in your other courses.

Music makes you smarter!

