

HOW TO PRACTICE AT HOME AND GET THE MOST OUT OF IT!

Step 1:

Review the assignment sheet that your teacher gave you. What are the main ideas that you need to work on during this practice session? What are the things that you need to change in your playing or to focus on? Please write these answers down here:

Step 2:

Look at the lesson material and determine what the lesson is trying to teach. Look for new terms, new concepts, and other special items that are often listed in the spaces between the lines of music or at the top of the lesson page. What are these new concepts? If your teacher assigned special terms to you, what are their definitions?

Step 3:

Do a standard warm-up routine. Either do the warm-up that your teacher has assigned you or practice the scales or rudiments that are a part of your assignment. Spend at least five minutes on your warm-up. Remember that the purpose of the warm-up is to get your body ready to play harder things and to reinforce good habits. Pay attention to your posture, horn or hand position, sound, tone quality, and breathing.

Step 4:

Look at the individual lines and pre-read them without playing. What is the key signature? What is the time signature? Are there any new notes that you do not know? Are there any strange fingerings or rhythmic patterns? Take note of these things and then play through the lesson.

At the end of each line use a highlighter or a pencil and mark the parts of the song that you know you are going to need to work on. Leave the easy stuff unmarked.

Step 5:

Spend at least 50% of your practice time working on the hard parts that you just marked in step 4. Take a short break in the middle of your practice session then go back and continue working on the hard material. The only way to fix it is to work it out a little bit at a time!

Step 6:

Once you have spent some time working out the hard parts of the lesson, go back and play through the entire assignment. If you still find yourself having problems with a specific section, mark it in some way and make yourself work on that section again during your next practice session. Always end your practice session with something you are comfortable with and enjoy playing.

Six Steps to a Better Practice Session

1. Review the Assignment
2. Think About the Music
3. Warm-Up Your Body & Mind
4. Play Through Once & Mark It
5. Rehearse the Hard Parts
6. Put It All Together