



Practice SMART! Become a GREAT Musician!

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF HOME PRACTICE

Daily home practice is essential for you to adequately learn your instrument and for you to become successful, reaching your full potential. If you create and keep up consistent, effective, "SMART" practice at home - You will become the best musician you can possibly be! Here are some tips and pointers to help you make the most of home practice.

PRACTICE POINTERS

1. For consistency - a little bit of practice everyday is better than big chunks. For example: 20 minutes, 6 days per week (120 minutes) is better than practicing 60 minutes, 2 days (120 minutes).
2. When you make a mistake, stop and fix it! If you practice it wrong over and over, you are actually teaching yourself to play the mistakes.
3. If you make a mistake more than once in the same section of music, make SURE that you circle that mistake and spend extra time fixing that mistake. Write some kind of mark to help you play that correctly the next time. You can write the name of the note, a flat, sharp or natural, the correct counting, etc. It's very important to always have and use a pencil to mark the music to help you remember the next time.
4. Remember: if you are having difficulty with a section of music, SLOW it down, play it over & over & over correctly at a slow speed and gradually play it faster.
5. Once you get it right - repetition is the key. For example: try to play that spot 3 times perfect before you will allow yourself to go on.
6. Once you are comfortable with right notes and rhythms, practice the "other stuff" (dynamics, accents, etc.).
7. Be sure to play with a good sound and in tune!
8. Remember to tap your foot and count carefully in your head (drummers, count out loud!) while you play.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING

1. Slow it down!
2. Isolate the section or measure.
3. Finger through without playing.
4. Count it/clap it/Say the rhythm and play it.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Encourage quality, focused time - not just quantity of minutes.
2. Help to establish a regular and consistent routine (a little bit everyday is better).
3. Help to create a good practice spot - sturdy armless chair, music stand, pencil, take away distractions (turn off computer/tv, etc.).
4. Be a motivator - avoid being discouraging about how students sound when practicing. Look for ways to encourage them. Be sensitive about when it's appropriate to point out mistakes and when your child needs the praise instead of criticism.
5. Have your child "perform" for you, either to help analyze a problem or when he/she wants to share what has been accomplished.