



### Think about your practice space.

- Make sure you have plenty of room to play your instrument.
- Your practice space should be well ventilated and have lots of light so you can see your music clearly.
- If possible your practice space should have a mirror so you can see your posture and check your playing position too.
- If it is safe to do so, leave your instrument out, sitting in its case. This will allow you to start your practice straight away and might encourage you to do a little more and stay at it a little longer.
- Always use a music stand and check that it is at the correct height for you. You should neither be stooping nor stretching as you look at your music.



### Practice schedule.

- Lots of short practices throughout the week are far better than one longer practice. You are trying to create muscle memory for things like breathing, finger patterns and bowings as well as train your brain to simultaneously read the notes and rhythms, listen to your intonation (tuning) and improve your technique.
- You should aim to practise at least 5 days a week. Depending on your level this may vary from 10 minutes to an hour each session.
- Try to practise at the same time every day as this will make your instrumental practise part of your daily routine.
- For younger pupils a practice chart on the wall in the rehearsal space is a good idea. Players can mark their progress with a sticker or smiley face while seeing how much practice they have achieved each week.
- Before you start your practice, remember to look at your practice diary/notes to ensure you are focussing on the area your teacher has highlighted. You can always do more, but it is important to start with their suggestions.

## Practice Technique



Playing your instrument is not the same as **practising**.

- Practice is about isolating a section and focussing on making it better. These sections should be short and played slowly to make sure you are playing it correctly. For example this may be a rhythm which needs to be played over and over again until you remember what it looks like, sounds like and feels like to play. Rhythms can be practised on one note until you feel confident that you can play it accurately. Then you can add all the notes in slowly and gradually build up the tempo. Only when you feel confident about playing this rhythm should you put it back into the context of the whole piece of music.
- It may be the actual notes that you are finding difficult. Again, choose a short section and play it slowly. Think about the finger patterns and listen to your tuning. Play it over and over again until your fingers know what to do. If you need to write the finger patterns onto your music do it – you can always rub them out later or keep them in and use them as a guide. Gradually play this short section a little faster and keep building up the speed while always listening to your tuning. Only when you feel confident about playing these notes with the correct fingers should you put it back into the context of the whole piece of music.
- *If you are not sure how a rhythm or section of notes should sound, ask your teacher to record it for you and then you can practise along to it at home.*
- Practice also involves building your technique on an instrument. Sometimes it is a technique that you need to rehearse rather than a rhythm or a section of notes. It may be you are learning about staccato playing, slurring or accents. Here your teacher may ask you to focus on an exercise. Again follow the suggestions above – slow, repeated practise, listening to the sound you are making. Record it and listen back. With a technical exercise it sometimes helps to look in the mirror as you practise as you can watch your posture / breathing / bow placement etc.

### Specific Singing Practice Tips



When learning a new song take it apart and focus on all the different aspects such as the breathing and phrasing, loosening the jaw, finding the vowels and consonants that are important. Try speaking the text in rhythm. This will make it easier when you put the melody and words together.

Make a story board or movie in your mind of the song. Use your imagination to visualise everything you are singing and become a character within the song. Who am I? Why I am singing this song? What emotions are in this song?

Watch good singers perform and see what they do technically and dramatically

Download the songs/ music you are learning onto your phone and listen to them around the house. You can be listening and learning as you are on the go. You do not always have to be in front of your music.

No 'Good Luck' needed – Just 'Good Practice' .....