

Practicing Guidelines

Summer Lessons 2020
Webinar May 20, 2020

Practicing can be one of the most personal things we experience as an instrumentalist. This requirement of what we do includes hours of spending time alone with our music and instrument trying to figure out how to make what we are doing better. My job as a teacher is to provide you with goals and methods for practicing smarter and faster- The accomplishments you make as a student are simply your accomplishments!

We all get worked into careless routine- brushing our teeth for 30 seconds instead of 2 minutes. Washing our hands quickly rather than the recommend 20 seconds? ...forgetting to shower while in quarantine....) Be sure you are realizing potential by actively working towards your goals. Every time you pick up the horn. Every note you play. Every phrase should have realized potential.

The following materials and ideas are part of a webinar presented to summer lessons students and UL Lafayette Trombone and Low Brass Studio students in May, 2020.

Practice with goals:

- See “Goals” organizer below
- What do you want to accomplish?
 - o Pick something you can accomplish
 - o Select a timeframe of accomplishment
 - o Before practicing, be sure to have a plan on HOW to accomplish the goal
- Notes about goals
 - o Goals must be part of a greater plan for the day/week/month/rotation
 - o Write down goals
 - Log notes before the session/during/after
 - o Stay positive
 - Being negative in goals will wear you down (“I have to learn this music!”)
 - If a goal isn’t accomplished, look at it rationally: Why? What was the misstep? How can I do better tomorrow?
 - When practicing, try to remove feelings or emotion about yourself, and instead, try to be more like a teacher- rather than telling yourself something sounds like crap, tell yourself that isn’t the way you intend to play that, and come up with ways of working through it.

Practice in Blocks of Time:

- See “Daily Practice Blocks” form below
- Blocks helps you organize time, needs of the instrument, and keeps you on track
- Organization is key the further you go in this:
 - o Example: Next fall I have 3 recital tours, 2 concerto performances, 5 orchestral performances, 1 band performance, 1 jazz performance, several chamber ensemble performances, and some things I don’t know about yet. I’ve spent the

last 3 weeks working out plans for all this music and starting to work on it, but my plan includes times for all of these things to come together.

Take notes:

- Notes help you remember what you have accomplished and not accomplished

Other Tools:

- Metronome
- Tuner
- Record
- Use a mirror
- Video Record
- Envision the performance for excitement

Time, Tune, Tone

- In this order, these are the biggest things to focus on in practice

Daily Practice Blocks

Daily Practice Blocks

Note: Size of block represents the amount of time students USUALLY should spend on a topic.

Daily Routine:

- Long tones
- Lip slurs
- Buzzing
- Slow scales/arpeggio
- Range studies
- Developed daily routine (Vining, Remington, etc)

25-40 minutes

Scale/Technical Studies:

- Slow
- Drones/tuner
- Learning/Memorizing/something new
- Maintaining Knowledge
- Partial Adjustments
- Slide accuracy/technique

20-25 minutes

Sight Reading:

- New
- Duets
- Use etudes on YouTube to play along/Duets
- Lip Slur/Tuning Drone Duets

5-10 minutes

Music:

- Solos
- Etudes
- Ensemble music
- Chamber music
- Gig music
- MORE!

Practice:

- Slow
- Small chunks
- What sucks? Fix it.
- Ignore the good stuff, focus on the bad
- Develop goals and stick with them

60-? minutes

Listening/Score Study:

- Listen to the best examples of your craft
- Score study (scores online)
- Sing along
- Conduct along
- Know your music!

Lots of minutes

Cool Down:

- Long tones
- Slow slurs
- Low Range Studies

5-10 minutes

Instrument Maintenance:

- Clean slide
- Oil Valve

Do this while listening?

Lesson and Practice Notes

Lesson Notes

Week: _____

Key Lesson Points:

Tone: Intonation: Rhythm: Musicality: Technique:
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Scales/Arpeggi:

Technical Exercises:

Lip Slurs:

Daily Routine Notes:

Etudes:	Technique Issues:
	Musical Considerations:
	Additional Comments:

Solo Literature:

Ensemble Material:

Weekly Practice Goals

Weekly Practice Goals: Use this sheet to organize your goals and practice time.

Goals for this Week

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Goals for this Month

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Day	Times	Practice Materials/Assignments	Comments/Outcomes/Questions
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Scales

Ideas on learning scales: Be creative with your scale practice- make exercises and change the dynamics or style each practice session. The following are some ideas of ways to practice scales to keep them fresh and interesting to work on:

- 1) Find the positions: Air Slide the positions while you say the note names. This connects physical movements with the actual note. It is important to not only know the associated positions for the scale, but also know the note names and intonation tendencies.
- 2) Expanding scale: Play this pattern that builds the scale one note at a time:

1
121
12321
1234321
123454321
12345654321
1234567654321
123456787654321
- 3) Whole Step Half Step: Think of the scale in whole steps (W) and half steps (H). All major scales follow the same whole step/half step pattern. A half step is the smallest distance between notes on a keyboard, and a whole step is double that distance. Major Scale Pattern: WWHWWWH.
- 4) Just Intonation: Just intonation is a tuning system in which frequencies of notes are related by ratios of small whole numbers, this is the system used for tuning by instrumentalists, except for keyboard instruments. Practice the scale using a generated or recorded drone. Drone on the root alone, root and 5th scale degree or even root in octaves. Be sure every note in the scale is in tune with the drone. Consider using a Strobe Tuner to check notes that are not in tune with the drone, there could be issues with your own expectation of scale intonation.
- 5) Equal Temperament: Practice the scale with the keyboard, making sure each note is perfectly in tune with the equal tempered keyboard (different from just intonation: equal temperament is a system of tuning, in which every pair of adjacent notes is separated by the same interval. This is very good practice for performing with piano accompaniment.