

## Tips for Individual Practice

Following are some useful tips for what to ask of your students when they practice individually. Devise your own system for what you want them to accomplish.

- Prior to warm-up, listen to two minutes of a recording of your favorite artist on your instrument; then try to imitate the artist's sound.
- Set goals for each practice session and devise a logical order of things to cover, beginning with a well-planned warm-up.
- Pick a set time each day.
- Have a set place to practice.
- Strive to cover as many Components of Playing as possible, starting with the Four T's: Timing, Tuning, Tone, and Technique.
- Begin the practice session with stretching, followed by breathing exercises. Brass players should also buzz on the mouthpiece.
- Play the first notes with an emphasis on great tone quality.
- Practice in twenty-minute increments, with five minutes of rest between.
- Stay relaxed; tension is your worst enemy.
- Remember that a few minutes of quality practice is better than any minute of bad, unfocused practice. As the saying goes...  
*Only perfect practice makes perfect.*
- Use a tuner and metronome during personal practice sessions.
- Increase your dynamic range.
- When sight-reading, establish a slow, logical tempo that will enable you to play everything on the page while maintaining a steady pulse.
- Record yourself to critique your work and gain a personal knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Finish the practice session by playing something fun (maybe your favorite piece). Brass players should warm down by playing long tones down to the lowest note on their instrument.

One of the hardest things to develop in students in this information age is a work ethic to practice. Because students can pick up any electronic device and instantaneously get what they want, they want to make the same application to playing music. Their feeling of just wanting to play straight through a piece is compounded when it doesn't happen right away. Students must learn that success comes from hard work, tedious work, and slow work.

### Individual Practice

- 1) Stretching
- 2) Breathing Exercises
- 3) Buzzing or Long Tones

Then listen to two minutes of a recording  
of a favorite artist on your instrument.  
Now try to imitate that sound!

## Warm-Up:

### Everyone:

- Descending and ascending intervals
- Whole-tone scale for two-octave range

### Woodwinds:

- Long tones on every note of the instrument
- High and low register studies (might include going over the break and overtone studies)
- Chromatic scale exercises
- All twelve (i.e., fifteen) major scales and arpeggios
- Dynamic exercises
- Various articulation studies

### Brass:

- Attack and release patterns
- Four scales with arpeggios in contrasting styles (marcato, legato, staccato, slurred)
- Lip slurs
- Dynamic exercises
- Five-step articulation exercise

## Literature:

- Method book
- Supplemental fundamentals book
- Concert literature
- Private lesson or class assignments

## Practice Auditioning:

- Sight-reading
- Major scales
- Chromatic scale
- Required etudes
- Other audition requirements

**“Perfect Practice Makes Perfect!”**