

Perfect Practice Makes Progress: Practice Tips

1. **Create a permanent practicing nook** for yourself and leave it set up all the time. Set up a chair and a [wire music stand](#) somewhere where there are few distractions. Put together your instrument and leave it set up all of the time (leave it somewhere little siblings or pets won't be able to hurt it). This way, it's easy for you to practice for a few minutes when you feel like it, and you don't have to go through the hassle of setting up your instrument/practice space.
2. **Write down a goal** for every practice session (Example: I want to be able to play these 8 measures perfectly at metronome marking = 150). You can accomplish more in a short amount of time when you have a focused goal.
3. **Be methodical.** Clap the rhythm, speak the note names, finger the notes, then play it.
4. **Never choose a tempo that is faster than you can play the music correctly.** Start very slow and gradually increase the tempo each repetition until you can play it perfectly at the tempo you want (but never play it faster than you can play it perfectly).
5. **Practice small chunks!** Don't just run through an entire song a bunch of times. Run through it once to find the part that challenges you the most and practice that small chunk (less than 8 measures). If slowing it down isn't helping, try starting with two notes and adding one more note for each repetition until you can play the entire difficult small chunk correctly. The next day, choose a different difficult small chunk to work on, and then put those chunks together.
6. **Seventeen is a magic number.** If you can play something correctly 17 times in a row, you are less likely to mess it up later. Don't practice until you get it right; practice until you can't get it wrong!
7. **Don't frustrate yourself.** Slow it way down, take breaks, or come back to it later/tomorrow if what you are working on starts to frustrate you. Mix it up - if you've practiced something for a while and still can't get it right 17 times in a row, change the articulations (slurring/tonguing patterns), stand on one foot, or memorize it and do it with your eyes closed. Sometimes changing something helps your brain to retain it better.
8. **Use your resources.** If you are ever confused about a fingering, check a fingering chart. There is one on the last page of your red book, or you can Google a fingering chart for your instrument. If you're unsure if you're playing the correct pitch, use a tuner app. If you still need help with anything, email Ms. DiMento!

*If you practice correctly from the beginning, you will
save yourself a lot of time and frustration later on.
Don't practice bad habits!*