

Practice Tips and Tricks

The importance of home practice

- You can learn skills, but you'll never realise your full potential unless you practice
- We have limited time during rehearsals
 - Rehearsal is not practice
 - A rehearsal is where you can show other band members you have been practicing
- We have limited time during tutorials
 - Small groups but only 30 minutes a week
- Practice allows you to;
 - Leverage the learnings attained in tutorials and rehearsals
 - Learn at your own pace
 - Set your own goals
 - Develop learning/focus skills
 - Progress quickly

How to prepare

- Leave your instrument and music out of its case
- Plan your time efficiently
- Free yourself from distractions
- Sit in a comfortable upright chair and use a music stand
- Often short bursts of 10 mins with breaks to do other things work
- Research shows learning to play an instrument can help with focus, practice before homework

How often should I practice?

- Practice should become a habit
- Practice is cumulative (shorter regular sessions are better than one long session a week)
- Use your practice log

How to practice – Tips and Tricks

- Warm-up with a few long notes and scales
 - Play at a comfortable volume
 - Don't rush, the idea is to warm-up
- Practice time is valuable, work on the parts you can't play
 - Little and often is better than one long session a week – practice is cumulative
 - Practicing only the parts you can already play doesn't have the same benefits as working on the harder stuff
 - Set realistic learning goals
 - Look for parts which are similar so as not to replicate practice effort

- Start slowly and gradually increase speed where required
 - You can download a free metronome app for most devices
 - Small electronic metronomes are only a few dollars and make great gifts
- Trying starting at the end of a piece of music (ie the last 2 or 4 bars) and work backwards 2/4 bars at a time
 - I often hear students who can play the first 4 bars beautifully, but then start to waiver
 - This is likely because they always start their practice playing from the beginning of the music and run out of time to practice the bars towards the end of the music
- Ask someone to listen to you and look for constructive feed-back
 - Organise a family concert
 - Get together with your friends and form your own 'band'
- Don't just practice until you can get it right, practice until you can't get it wrong
 - This is the difference between learning something and 'mastering' it
 - Strive to get it right each time you play it
- Make it fun!
- Try playing along with the Essential Elements CD or online
- Ask your parents to download you some music. There is lots of free music available on-line
- Try writing your own music. You can download free music notation apps for most platforms
- Organise a family concert
- Video or record yourself playing
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How parents can help...yes that's you

- Parental encouragement is key to achieving the best learning outcome
- The Essential Elements books are easy for all to understand
- If you already play an instrument, try playing along with your child
- Consider purchasing a music stand
- Encourage practice on a regular basis and take the time to listen to your child
- Coach the previous tips and tricks
- Take the opportunity to get involved with learning music
- Consider learning an instrument yourself!