



How to Practice

Playing a musical instrument is a physical activity and like any physical activity, the body needs repetition for strength and accuracy. Every musician uses tiny muscles in their mouth and hands, and those muscles need conditioning - an act that requires **daily repetition**. Even practicing the same pieces help strengthen a student's embouchure and grip.

Along with the tiny muscles, daily practice helps improve student's accuracy. Ability could be defined as "being able" to duplicate *without mistake* over and over again. Daily practice helps students become more accurate in playing their music.

Where does your child practice?

Since practicing involves hearing, reading, and focusing, it's best to practice in a place with the least amount of distractions possible. Most elect to practice in a bedroom with the door closed. If at all possible, try to practice in the biggest room available and try to fill the entire room with a big, beautiful sound.

When does your child practice?

When to practice is not nearly as important as setting a practice schedule for every day. Decide the best time to practice and stick to your schedule. Even during busy times, a few minutes at least can keep the muscles in shape as well as the instrument. Unlike other machines, musical instruments get better the more they are played. The worst way to treat an instrument is to leave it in its case.

Do you hear these things from your child?

1. Daily Drill/Warm-Up: 5-10 mins. of breathing, long tones, buzzing, interval exercises, lip slurs, etc.
2. Articulations: 5 mins. moving from long to short note lengths (legato to marcato to staccato)
3. Scales: 5-10 mins. of concert Bb, Eb, Ab, F, C, & Chromatic scales (as many octaves as you can)
4. Rhythm/Sightreading: 5-10 mins. (sightreadingfactory.com - Login: beltonmsband@gmail.com and Password: [GoTigers20](#))
5. Music: 10-15 mins. of lines from the book, All-Region etudes, UIL & concert pieces, stand tunes, private lesson assignments, and fun stuff!

These times are estimates of the length it takes for these areas to improve. They are meant to be used as guidelines for student practice and can vary according to necessity. Have a certain goal in mind for every practice session, and adapt the other elements around that goal. Spend the most time on the chosen goal for the day and work on the other elements another time.

How to Practice for Beginners:

1. Count It
2. Syllable It (TAH)
3. Note Name It
4. Finger It
5. Play It

Advanced Practice (7th/8th):

1. Count It
2. Syllable It (TAH)
3. Finger It with Syllables
4. Air Band It while Fingering
5. Play It

True practicing does not occur until after a piece is learned. **Do not quit** after playing something once without mistakes. Only after a piece is without mistakes should it be played over and over again multiple times.

I have read "How to Practice" and will help my child follow these guidelines when they practice.

Print Student Name: _____.

Parent Signature: _____.