

Best Practice for...Practice!

Advanced - Grade 6 -8

Look at you - congratulations!

Now, by now I've no doubt that you know how to sit down and do a bit of work but as the music gets harder so does the practice so here are a few tips to help you through!

Warm up!

Always warm up. Warming up is good for both your body and your mind. Sometimes it is difficult to concentrate especially if you have lots of other commitments. A warm up (scales, exercises, studies) is a great way to get your head in the game and your fingers or voice all warmed up and ready to go. Once your body is warmed up and your mind has had a little time to focus on the task at hand you are ready to go!

Do it in chunks!

Break your practice up into easy chunks! An hour can seem like a very long time but if you can motivate yourself and say "Right, I'm going to real focus on these two bars for 5 mins and then relax" then you will do proper work in that time and you will progress much faster than sitting there feeling sorry for yourself for the full session! If you get a taste of how far you can get in even 5 focused minutes you'll get the bug and it will be much easier to discipline yourself to do it again.

There are different kinds of practice!

Sometimes there is no time to practice, that is life. But don't fear, if you have a mad week then there are a few different ways of keeping on top of your work. Listening to your pieces is an absolutely fab way of learning music (a lot of professional musicians do this to learn on the go) and you can listen anywhere - on the bus, in a free period, in your room. Give it a go!

Habit!

Practice has got to become a habit. By now you are probably pretty good at getting yourself to sit down and do a little work but your life will be a lot easier if you don't have to think twice about practicing during the week. Regular 35 - 60 min practice sessions are all you need to keep on top of your music. If you don't do regular sessions then practice can feel like 1 step forward 2 steps back which is frustrating and no fun - so keep it regular!

Have your favourite pieces ready!

Have your favourite pieces ready to go at all times! It can be easy to forget that learning music is wonderful fun and creative when you are trying to get through all your different music exams so having something you love to sing or play or really want to learn there and ready waiting at the end of your practice session can be good motivation to get through the technical work - just remember, all that technical work means more and more pieces will be great fun to play!