



## HOW TO PRACTICE AT HOME

1. Consult your **teacher** about the recommended time and frequency of at home practice.
2. **Set up a special space where** the student can practice without interruptions. Students must have a set up where they can focus and optimize the learning process. Less distractions equals faster learning.
3. **Voice students**, due to the nature of their instrument, have shorter practice times than instrumentalists.
4. **REWARDS:** in order to motivate the students to practice regularly, we suggest offering a reward. **Start small:** you can make an excel spread sheet or give the student a small sticker for every day of the week when they practice. Use a 3D sticker as a reward at the end of the week. At the end of a month the reward can be more significant, such as ice cream outing with the family, extra screen time or extra time with friends. In order to teach the children the value of being consistent and making incremental progress it is essential for the parents to be consistent but kind in giving the rewards.
5. **INSTRUMENTS:** beginner students can start with a simple, more affordable instrument until they show serious interest and consistent practice. There is no need to invest in an expensive instrument while the student is still at the very beginning stages.
6. **YOUNG STUDENTS:**
  - don't need long practice time at home because they don't have much homework and their attention span is shorter. Adjust the practice time to accommodate their age and attention span.
  - at the beginning, students need parents' help during practice
  - learning is connecting new information to the information already learned. Young students, not having much preexisting knowledge, might find music lessons somewhat challenging at the beginning. It's important to help them along the way with encouragement and patience.
  - young students need to be reminded about the practice times; they probably won't remember to practice until about middle school.
7. **MIDDLE SCHOOL AND OLDER STUDENTS:**
  - The practice time needs to increase to about 5 days per week and for longer periods of time. A good way to set up the practice is to repeat each homework item 7 times during each practice day, and to practice problem sections additional 5-10 times.
  - Students with advanced repertoire should consult their teacher and follow the recommendations about the length and structure of practicing.
  - There is never a need to practice all 7 days of the week. Break is just as important for learning as practice is.

- **PRIVACY** – students of this age are self-conscious, and it is important for them to have privacy when practicing. That way they can make mistakes and learn without being afraid of inadvertent judgment from the most important people in their lives – their family.

8. **REPETITION** is the key to learning music. A couple of helpful tips:

- Learning is connecting something we don't know with something we do know. The less knowledge the student has the more repetition is needed to learn the new skill. Once they build some skills and gain knowledge, the learning will go faster
- Repeating accurate notes, rhythms and technique is the key. Repeating homework inaccurately will just strengthen the mistakes and the learning will be slower.
- Repeating things less frequently but perfectly accurately is much better than repeating many times with mixed results.

9. **PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT** (not perfect) – Practicing wrong things will make the wrong things permanent.

Our brain remembers what we do repeatedly. If we do the same things over and over again, the brain builds neural paths that respond together, i.e. are wired together. Changing inaccurate notes and rhythms requires slow and deliberate practice to rewire the brain to deliver the desired results. Learning things correctly from the start will produce a much faster and more rewarding learning experience.

*Please feel free to call us or e-mail if we can offer additional clarifications.*

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