

Brent Mead

913-229-1024 | brentmeadmusic@gmail.com

Practicing Tips and Tricks “Focused & Goal-Driven”

Before you begin practicing

- Have a plan
 - Goals
 - Time
 - How to measure success
- Journal
 - Uses
 - Measurements: double tonguing speed, etudes worked on, excerpts learned
 - Feelings: “This went well.” “I love minor scales”
 - Goals for next day based on what didn’t go well
 - Why?
 - Proof of accomplishments and progress
 - Focuses practice

Daily Practice Structure

- Warmup
- Fundamentals
 - Different than warmup? Yes.
 - Warmup is stretching, addressing fundamentals is practicing and improving technique
 - **The best musicians practice fundamentals daily, effectively, and efficiently. The improving musician practices fundamentals more each day than repertoire.**
- Repertoire
 - 30-minute sessions (Focused, intense, goal-driven)
 - Solos, excerpts, ensemble music, freelance music, upcoming projects, etc.

In the Practice Room

- ‘Practicing’ does not mean playing through an etude/solo/excerpt–this is ‘playing’. Effective practicing means addressing small issues in your playing
- Balance the concepts of “not making a mistake” vs “only practice what you’re bad at”
 - Play difficult passages in a manner that allows you to play it perfectly
 - In a comfortable octave, slowly, simply rhythm, remove notes, etc
 - Scaffold the practice session to slowly build in difficulty
 - If you don’t address the worst aspects of your playing, you will never improve
- Learning practice tricks takes years of development, but practice “low and slow”
- Record yourself, use a metronome, and tuner every session
 - Too many musicians don’t know how they actually sound
 - Time and intonation are the most common critiques of young musicians

After

- Jot down your thoughts, goals for next time you practice that piece
- Listen to music, study scores, practice mentally