

How to Practice

Practicing consists of three key elements:

1. Warm-Up
2. Technique Building
3. Repertoire

1. Warm-Up (5-10 minutes)

- Goals/Areas of Focus: TONE
 - **posture**: sitting up straight, feet flat on the floor
 - **position**: fingers curved, wrists relaxed, shoulders down, etc.
 - **embouchure**: top teeth on mouthpiece, bottom lip cushion, relaxed jaw, corners forward, cheeks not puffed, space between top and bottom teeth
 - **breathing**: deeply, from below belly button
- Practice Exercises:
 - Neck Tones
 - Breathing Exercise (“Developing the Initial Attack”)
 - Long Tones on low notes
 - Saxophone Yoga
 - Remington Study

2. Technique Building (15-30 minutes)

- Goals/Areas of Focus:
 - **increasing reading speed**: flash cards of note types, note names, etc.
 - **rhythm**: exercises in counting and clapping
 - **clean finger transitions**: perfectly smooth transition between notes
 - **tonguing clarity and speed**
 - **pure, even tone**: on each note, between intervals, using vibrato, etc.
- Practice Exercises:
 - Flash Cards
 - Rhythm: “Basic Rhythmic Training” by Robert Starer
 - Scales
 - Arpeggios
 - Articulation
 - Vibrato

3. Repertoire: Class/Lesson Assignments (20-45 minutes)

Practice Techniques

Practice Steps

1. **Count** out loud: say rhythm while tapping foot. Use your metronome to help
2. **Finger**: position fingers while saying note name out loud
3. **Articulate**: while fingering, say "ta" or "do" for notes without a slur
4. **Play**: 7 repetitions in a row without mistakes = bump up the metronome

If you practice effectively, you can conquer anything!!! Here are some practice techniques to try with difficult passages:

-Small Phrases Even if you need to play an entire piece, don't play the whole thing every day! Take small phrases (one measure, e.g.) and perfect each one before moving on

-SLOW DOWN If you can't play it perfectly the first time, you're going too fast!! Turn down the metronome to make your practice time worthwhile

-sing! It doesn't have to be beautiful; this exercise strengthens breath support, focuses air direction, and creates expressivity in sound

-Chunk Identify problem spot. Add one note before and after the trouble spot, then gradually add more notes before trying the entire passage again

-CHAINING Great for learning scales!! Start with the first note, then with each repetition, add one more note. After finishing the entire scale (or passage), play through at least 5 times correctly before moving on

-BACKWARDS Sometimes it's helpful to play music backwards; it exercises the left (analytical) side of the brain

-rocky rhythm Change around the rhythm of the passage: dotted eighth notes followed by sixteenths; triplets; swung eighth notes; the possibilities are endless! This is great for your brain to think of new rhythms and helps with muscle memory (for students in grades 8 and up)