

10 Tips to Practice

a guide to getting the most improvement in the practice room for all instruments.

*Understanding the difference between **Motivation**, **Inspiration**, and **Discipline**.*

Motivation is useless because it's something everybody loses from time to time. Try to stay inspired by others to strive for betterment, and use discipline of habits as a reliable source of energy as you work day to day for small victories.

*The Value of a **Planning Period** (mine is 30 minutes each Sunday Evening).*

Choose one time each week that is sacred. Enjoy a hot beverage and some silence as you plan out your practice for the week. Write things down, and be specific. Think of this as a cross between a journal and a checklist. If you do this each week, your time in the practice room will be far more focused.

*The Rule of **4**.*

Every time you practice something, even if it's only one note, make sure you play it four times. The first time, you play it to assess where you stand. The second, you play to experiment/change things to be better. Time three and four are to solidify things you've adjusted. This pattern will help you improve quick.

Tools are only useful if they're used for the correct job. A hammer doesn't help you when you're holding screws.

Carefully plan out your tools in the practice room. Don't just have a metronome or tuner on unless you're using them actively. Other practice tools in the room are useful as well, but only if you're using them correctly, with care, and mindfully.

*It takes **67 days** to form a new habit. Before then, you're still fighting your body to make a change.*

No matter how smart or mindful you are, your body still requires time to change. In fact, it's scientifically around 67 days to remap your brain. When trying something new, remember to forgive yourself for having to fight to make it work for a little while. Give ideas a fair chance.

Your mind is your best practice tool

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Teach yourself **out loud**, and talk to yourself like a **small child**.

Your brain processes information differently when you speak to yourself out loud. It also forces you to slow down with your instructions. As a bonus, speak simply to yourself in a kind and supportive way, like you would a younger nephew or niece. It will help your progress tremendously.

The **Critic** and The **Actor**.

Remember, at all times, you are two people. An actor, playing the part as you play, and a critic, who's job it is to analyze, adjust, and improve. The Critic should only be allowed to speak and think when the instrument is down. When the instrument is up, let The Actor do their work, and silence The Critic.

Art made physical is art respected.

A painter suffers steps forward and backward throughout the process, just as musicians do, but at the end, they have a physical piece of art to dispel the gaslighting of self-worth. Use a **nice** practice journal- write in it carefully, and work to make it art. It will be physical proof of your accomplishments when you doubt.

The **weekly** and **monthly** video.

Make a short one-take video of you playing something each week at the same time. Do the same (a bit longer) each month. You'll be very thankful to have records to go back to as proof of your long term improvement.

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When you're practicing, remember to implament the '**Synthesis-Analysis-Synthesis**' process. Play something, take it apart into smaller bits and practice them, then put them together. This can guide you through nearly any problem.

Small steps take you far places.