

How to practice music

No matter which instrument you are practicing, there are some basic considerations you may want to keep in mind.

RHYTHM

In order to be able to play with others, you have to play rhythms accurately. This will ensure that you are keeping the pace with other musicians and fitting in the musical context properly. Use the metronome to avoid or correct any inaccuracies. Here are a few tips:

1. Understand rhythmic notation fully.
2. Practice difficult passages slowly at first (see “Technique” below) to avoid/correct inaccuracies.
3. Subdivide beats if necessary. Here are a few examples: if the beat is in quarter notes and you need eighth notes, multiply the BPM by 2 (quarter=60 is same as eighth=120). If you need triplets, multiply the quarter beat by 3 (quarter=60, triplets=180).

TECHNIQUE

If you cannot play a fast passage flawlessly, SLOW it down and practice it with a metronome. Your mistakes and struggles will be heard by your peers and by the audience alike. Find a tempo at which you can play every note correctly (pitch, duration, tone quality), no matter how slow. If you can play the passage without mistakes five times in a row, you can speed up (about 2-4 clicks on the metronome). Gradually increase the tempo until you reach the tempo required.

NOTE ACCURACY/TUNING

Make sure you can play every note with the correct fingering. Do not ignore sharps or flats (or double sharps and double flats). Moreover, ensure that you are in tune at all times. Playing in tune *with yourself* is the first step toward becoming a good ensemble musician.

TONE

Always strive for an even and pleasing tone quality in all the registers of your instrument. Do not compromise your sound due to technically challenging passages.