

# WYSO PRACTICE - a - thon

## TIPS FOR PRACTICING

Music lessons alone do not make a student a better musician. Teachers provide guidance, tips, and advice on how to play something, but musical growth comes from a consistent and well-structured practice routine at home. Any student who wishes to progress on their instrument will need to spend countless hours developing their skills and knowledge. Positive encouragement and creating fun challenges with rewards will help students work towards their musical goals.

Here are some tips to help your child create an effective and efficient practice routine:

### 1) SET A GOAL:

It's been said "If you aim for nothing, you'll achieve it every time." It's important to set a goal for each practice session. What are you trying to achieve? Ask your teacher to help set some goals for your practice sessions.

### 2) PRACTICE EVERY DAY:

5-15 minutes a day goes a long way for developing musicians at any level. The key here is consistency: Practicing a little bit every day keeps things fresh and sharp. Playing 5 minutes every day is better than 30 minutes once a week.

### 3) FIND SOMEWHERE QUIET:

A quiet place to focus can make all the difference in creating an effective practice routine. If there are distractions your time will slip away and all the best intentions will be for naught.

### 4) HAVE ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS NEARBY:

If you need to constantly leave your practice area to grab a pencil, your tuner, metronome, music, or a glass of water, you're not going to get much done. Be prepared with all the things you might need before you start your session.

### 5) WARM UP/COOL DOWN:

Start each practice session with a quick physical warm-up, do a few stretches, focus on your breath, play a scale or simple technique study to get you ready for the harder material. Finish your practice session by fooling around on your instrument, making something up, or playing through a song you know and love.

### 6) PRACTICE SLOWLY:

This is critical! We often want to play things fast, but playing slowly allows us to play songs correctly, with good technique and better tone quality. Whenever something is a challenge to play and you get frustrated, slow it down and try it again. The slower the better! Speed comes after playing something smoothly. Once you master something at a slow speed, you can start to play it faster and with more skill. The metronome is a great tool to help with this, and is essential for any serious musician.

### 7) DON'T ALWAYS START AT THE BEGINNING:

Why not? Often, the more challenging parts are later in the song; be sure not to rush through those sections or skip over them. Start with the challenging stuff and practice it slowly, and in tiny fragments. Repeat it again and again and again until it feels comfortable. Then, add a few more measures to the difficult part and see if you can string together more of the song. If something keeps giving you trouble, make a note and practice it again the next day.

### 8) USE A TIMER:

Set a timer for the amount of time you intend to practice. When it goes off, you're done!

### 9) WRITE IT DOWN:

Use a practice log to keep notes about what you've been working on. It helps you see how much work you've done and what your challenges and achievements are over time.

### 8) PRACTICE AWAY FROM YOUR INSTRUMENT:

Visualization is a powerful tool to help you practice when you're away from your instrument. Visualize how the music sounds and how you play it on your instrument. You'll be amazed how effective this technique can be! It can inform you what you need to work on when you do practice with your instrument in hand.

### 11) TEACH IT:

Teaching is a powerful way to underscore what you have learned. It helps you communicate what you are doing and recognize things that you are still unsure about and need to focus more of your practice time on. If you're a parent, ask your child to teach you what they are working on!

