

How To Practice Properly –

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1. **Write down goals.** Do you want to learn all of your scales, or improve your range, double tonguing, triple tonguing, Jazz improvisation, etc...? Write a practice schedule and what you will do to achieve these goals.
 2. **Realize that you are your own teacher.** Analyze your playing. What do and don't you like about it? How can you make it better?
 3. **Isolate tricky sections.** Play them tongued if they are supposed to be slurred, and slurred if they are to be tongued. Play them down an octave. This will help you hear the sections rather than focusing on hitting the high notes.
 4. **Play slowly.** You will accomplish your goals much faster if you learn to play a piece slowly and then speed up. Playing too fast will result in sloppy play and it will take you much longer to perfect the piece.
 5. **Use your ear.** Listen carefully. Did you pay attention to what you played or did you just play through it without thinking or using your ear.
 6. **Try working on one measure at a time and adding to it.** Don't continue until you can play without stopping and without making any mistakes. Yes, that means going back to top each and every time you stop.
 7. **Record yourself.** Listen to your playing from a different perspective and take notes on what you like, don't like, mistakes you can fix, and areas you can improve.
 8. **Perform for your family.** Get used to your nerves by having someone listen to you play a piece straight through from beginning to end.
 9. **Get a recording of what you are playing and study it.** Listen to it over and over until you have it memorized.
 10. **Listen to various repertoires and players of your instrument (classical, Jazz, etc...).** Each has his or her own unique sound.
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Sight Reading Guide

1. **Know all of your scales (major and minor), arpeggios, scales in thirds, and key signatures.** Then you are prepared for anything. If you know the of the music, you can essentially "skim" sections that are scalar.
2. **Always check the key signature and time signature before playing.** (This is a familiar and simple rule that's often forgotten. Even I fall in to this trap at times.)
3. **Don't take it too fast.** You don't want to play sloppily and you don't want too many starts and stops. Pick a comfortable tempo that allows you to be consistent.
4. **Be prepared and know before you play.** Look for key words like a tempo, allegro, and adagio so you know when to expect tempo changes. Find and identify all key changes as well.
5. **Be as musical as possible.** Anyone can play notes on a page. A musician brings the music to life.