

Putting Structure to Independent Practice

Playing outside of class/lesson time can be difficult (time, place, equipment, etc.), but is truly the key to self-improvement and mastery. Even with limited time, understanding how to manage a productive session will get you there. Make sure you have the drum or pad at the proper height (preferably standing in concert position),

- Focus on the development of technique, rolls, rudiment development, flexibility through rhythmic studies, and be particular with stickings, phrasing, rudiments, and tempos.
- Challenge yourself for accuracy (details) every time you practice.
- Try something different every time you practice.
- Use a metronome!

Adjust times proportional to the time you have. Don't skip a decent warm up ever.

Warm Up (5 to 10 minutes)

Try to cover each item, even if it's just 1 exercise.

- Hand, finger stretches (loosen up) Check height of instrument/pad
- Single strokes on each hand (flexibility, consistency, stick heights)
- Light rolls (double/single stroke)

GOAL: Relax hands, check grip,

Technical Development (10 to 20 minutes)

Choose one a week and concentrate mostly on that area.

- Double stroke patterns
- Rudiments (memorize, alternate hands)
- Rolls (double stroke, triplet, varied tempos)
- Technique (speed / steady pulse)
- Practice Mallets or auxiliary percussion if available

GOAL: Improve necessary skills, develop endurance.

Prepared Pieces (10 to 20 minutes)

Use this time to rehearse performance pieces.

- Performance pieces (concert repertoire) Aux. parts - play on pad.
- Playing assessment pieces
- Recital/audition material

GOAL: Be productive! Work on improving weaknesses instead of playing through music you've already mastered.

Sight Reading (5 to 10 minutes)

Play through something you haven't played before.

In a variety of styles, difficulties, time and key signatures.

- This is when lesson books, method books, or Etudes are useful.