

Putting Structure to Independent Practice

Playing outside of class/lesson time can be difficult (time, place, 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.

- Focus on the development of tone, rhythm, melodic and scale development, flexibility through overtone and interval studies, and be very particular with articulation, phrasing, fingering, and technical facility.
- Challenge yourself for accuracy (details) every time you practice.
- Try something different (long tone, scale, etc.) every time you practice.
- Use a metronome and tuner!

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.

- Long Tones (mid range notes, mid-low, to mid-high)
- Tuning (through different ranges)
- Embouchure (overtones)
- Fingers (Scale patterns - chromatic, major-minor, arpeggios)

GOAL: Loosen embouchure/reed, center tone in each range, tune.

Technical Development (10 to 20 minutes)

Choose one a week and concentrate mostly on that area.

- Tone (Long tones, tuning w/tuner)
- Flexibility (Overtones, intervals, articulation challenges - wide slurs)
- Range (practice in ranges not normally covered -low/high)
- Tonguing (Varied articulations -consistency)
- Technique (fingers/slides - speed in all keys)

GOAL: Breath control, endurance, muscle memory, mastery in all areas.

Prepared Pieces (10 to 20 minutes)

Use this time to rehearse performance pieces.

- Performance pieces (concert repertoire)
- 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 songbooks, method books, or Etudes are useful.

*Brass players should 'warm down' after each session with a few low, soft, long tones.
Reed players should take care of reed and instrument moisture when finished*