



# TOP TIPS FOR PLAYING YOUR INSTRUMENT AT HOME

## **TRY TO PLAY OR SING EVERY DAY**

If you are a beginner, play for at least 10 minutes.

If you are an experienced player, play for between 15 and 30 minutes.

## **FIND YOUR BEST TIME OF DAY.**

Choose a regular slot and stick to it. Whatever time you choose, schedule it in so that it becomes part of your family routine. Try to choose a time when you're feeling fresh!

## **RECORD YOURSELF**

This is fun! Record yourself playing/singing on a tablet and listen carefully to what you have done. Do you like what you hear? When you listen to yourself you might find that it clearly needs more work. Keep going! It is so worth it when you can sit back and actually enjoy what you have recorded.

## **PRACTISE MEANS PLAY WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW**

Most students will always sit and play familiar things that sound GOOD. Stand out from the crowd to get the most out of your time. Work on notes you can't yet play well. This will help you learn most effectively and quickly.

## **TRACK YOUR PROGRESS**

Add a note in your music diary when you have played - maybe you could start a new diary to log your playing. Your teacher will want to see how much work you have done each week.

## **USE YOUR EARS**

This will eventually be the most important tool for playing your instrument. Your ear will tell you a lot. So listen to it. If something sounds wrong, chances are it is.

## **SET SMALL GOALS**

This is one of the most important tips for true success. Whatever you are working on, be sure to break it down into small chunks - perhaps doing the first 2 bars perfectly before adding the 3rd bar. If you are a pianist, try getting the right hand perfect first before adding the left hand. Each bar you get right is an achievement. Don't wait until the tune is complete to feel good about it - every step you make is a step towards excellent playing.

## **DON'T RUSH AHEAD**

It's fun to peek ahead to see where you are going, but it is best to be patient. You will soon find that the harder notes you once looked at and feared will be well within your reach. Move slowly if you need to, and take one step at a time.

## **REMEMBER SCALES!**

Scales are evil. Scales are horrid. Scales are boring. Yes, we feel your pain! But they are really really useful and valuable, and NECESSARY. Get learning them if your teacher has given you some scales and arpeggios.



## TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Here are some additional pointers for families which we hope you find helpful over the coming weeks.

- Help your child set up a special place at home to play their instrument.
- Establish a time each day to play. Some children are at their best in the morning. Some parents set a time after the evening bath when the child is relaxed, but not tired.
- Consider using the phrase "playing time" rather than "practice time".
- Praise your child for each step forward.
- Try not to make negative remarks about how your child's playing sounds. It takes time and effort to produce musical sounds.
- Remember that there are always peaks and valleys in the learning process. You and your child should expect times of discouragement: accept them, and focus on the positive fact that he/she is learning to make music. Remind her/him that everything worth doing takes time and effort.
- If you are struggling to get your child to play, even a few minutes is better than nothing.
- Maybe schedule in a Mini Concert at the end of the day, or the end of the week, where they show off everything they have been learning. This should give them great motivation to work hard. It also means that you won't feel obliged to hover over your child or supervise them every day during practice time.
- Mini concerts could also be done over FaceTime/Skype to grandparents and friends.