



Melbourne's Award Winning Singing, Music & Entertainment School

## GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICING

1. Be there. Have your attention on what you are doing.
2. Be willing to learn something. You cannot learn if you think you know it all already.
3. Understand what you are practicing and why you are practicing it. Keep your personal goals in mind and aim for that result.
4. Accept the fact that learning to play well doesn't happen overnight. Learning musical skills takes time. You could learn certain small motions or ear training topics in a few minutes, but you need to invest enough hands-on repetition to develop stable skills. A beginner can take anywhere from twenty to seventy hours of practice to even begin to get the feel of things.
5. Learn to relax your body when playing. Accumulated tension is one of the biggest causes of body problems, rough playing and a host of ills. There are about 120 muscles, bones and tendons in both forearms and hands, and all of these "parts" are learning new motor controls. While you are learning control you will get tense. It is natural to use force to do something until control is developed. Not being relaxed when you play is like driving a car with the brakes slightly depressed. The brake pads are going to wear out real fast and you're in for a bumpy ride. Notice and release tension when you play. Tension can occur in any part of your body: hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders, lower back, face, mouth, legs, feet.
6. Learn how to practice at the "right" speed. To play anything well you need to develop complete control over what you are doing. Control is developed by repetitive actions at the speed that you can actually do the thing you are supposed to be doing. If you go too fast you can't "grab a hold" of whatever it is and it's like screeching around a corner in a car while driving too fast in the mountains. Go too fast and you end up in the trees. (And if you ever got mad and frustrated while practicing I bet you were just going to fast!)
7. Understand the words and symbols on any written materials you are using.
8. Learn to sing in tune if you don't already, regardless of the instrument you play. If you can't, this is easier to learn than you might think. It's almost impossible to fully enjoy playing music if your ears aren't working, and the way to train your ears is to sing. I don't mean singing as a vocalist but as a musician. This just means to be able to hit the right notes with your voice without any attention on how it sounds.
9. Develop a good sense of rhythm. Having good rhythm is vital, probably the most vital aspect of being a musician. Good rhythm can be developed with the proper drills. If your sense of rhythm is really bad it could take some time; however, you CAN develop good

rhythmic ability with efficient instruction and drilling.

10. Realize that people progress at different speeds according to current skill levels, past experience and inherent ability. Only compare your self to yourself, and if you want to move faster than you are, fine tune your practice approach and put in more hours.
11. Have fun. Music isn't worth doing if you can't have some fun while doing it. Not all studies are fun — many things aren't. But there is always a way to make some part of what you are doing fun and rewarding.