

The how's and why's of PRACTICING!

(For budding musicians and their parents)

Playing an instrument is a lot like playing a sport. For example, there are certain skills you need to develop so that you can play and enjoy baseball. So, you practice. You throw the baseball with your teammates, you practice hitting the ball, and you chase after those grounders. The more you do these things, the better you are at playing baseball. To play a sport well, you have to practice. To play an instrument well, you also have to practice.

It's up to the students to make themselves successful. Playing an instrument is a lot of fun and it's even more fun when your child can hear him or herself improving! Here are a few tips to read through with your child to get them started on their great adventure!

1. Have your own “practice place.”

You could choose your room, the living room, anywhere you like! Keep all your string materials in this place (instrument, stand, music, pencil, etc.) so it's all there when you're ready to play.

2. Practice 5 or more days a week.

Your muscles need to remember what it feels like to play correctly and this is best accomplished by playing your instrument as often as possible.

3. Practice 20 minutes or more each day.

You need to practice long enough to improve on what you already can do. 20 minutes is the smallest amount that will bring you success.

4. Practice at the same time every day.

This isn't always possible, but it can help make practicing a healthy habit. You are less likely to forget or to just not practice. Try practicing before school. It's the best time to avoid conflicts with after-school activities.

Now you know how and why to practice, but **WHAT** do you practice????

Follow this guide, and you are sure to be prepared for your lessons and to have a lot of fun, too!

1. Warm-ups.
2. Assigned songs and exercises in your book or other assigned sheet music.
3. Other songs and exercises of your choice.

When learning new songs, follow these four steps:

1. Clap and count
2. Clap and sing (the letter names)
3. Pizzicato (plucking)
4. Arco (bowing)

