

How (and What) to Practice

Break your practice time into blocks

- In general, there should be three blocks
 - Warm-up/fundamentals
 - Long tones, flexibility, range
 - Technique
 - Scales, arpeggios, articulation, etc
 - Repertoire
 - Solos, etudes, ensemble rep
- How much time for each depends on what you are preparing for
 - If you have an audition or competition coming up, more time on rep; if not, more time with fundamentals/technique

Sing-Buzz-Play

- Sing the part - do you have an interpretation of how YOU want it to sound? Do you know the pitch and rhythm?
- Buzz - can you translate that into the mouthpiece? Is your buzz efficient, or is it airy?
- Play - translate this into the instrument

Always have a purpose when practicing

- Play with intent and focus on specific things to improve on
 - Long tones for intonation and tone quality
 - Scales for technique, articulation
 - “Easy” things are a chance to work on perfecting things
 - “Hard” things are a chance to push yourself
- No matter what you are playing, ask yourself “is this the best I can sound on this material?”

Remember to breathe!

- Horn runs on air, practice taking full breaths!
 - Should feel your lungs and rib cage expand

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How to Learn a New Piece

Three stages of learning

- Basic
 - Familiar patterns
 - Fingerings
 - Technical difficulties
- Refinement
 - Phrasing
 - Dynamics
 - Tempo
 - Tone color
- Performance
 - Pre-performance routine
 - Performance practice
- **THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED PERFORMERS INCORPORATE STAGES 2 AND 3 AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE**

Tools for practicing/learning new pieces

- Tuner/drone
- Metronome
- Recording - BOTH listening to professional recordings and recording yourself

Break it down into smaller components

- Isolate different elements - rhythm, pitch
 - Practice rhythm by clapping/singing with metronome without the instrument
 - Practice pitch by buzzing or playing slowly
 - Especially helpful to take articulated passages and slur to make sure your air is working properly
- Play it slowly, but just as importantly play it differently!
 - Straight eighth notes can become dotted eighth-sixteenth for example
 - Don't play it the same way over and over, you will just reinforce how you are playing it currently

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