

IMPORTANT RULES FOR CORRECT PRACTICE

1. Always have a definite aim and method in your practicing.
2. Think before starting. Write it down in a little time-table planned for the day.
3. The first time you play your piece, or any section of it, be fanatically careful not to make any mistakes either in notes or in time values.
4. Sub-divide the piece into short sections.
5. Occasionally begin your practice period by beginning at the last section of the piece, then the next to last section, and so on until you have reached the beginning.
6. Practice very slowly, progress very fast. (Stephen Heller)
7. For the first few days of practice on a new piece, repeat one section four to eight repetitions before beginning to practice the next. When two sections have been practiced in this way, they should be joined together and given two to four repetitions as a whole. Ultimately all the sections should be fitted together in this way.
8. Resist the temptation to go on playing faster and faster. If you have a metronome, use it for an "external discipline" to check yourself.
9. If you feel you are not concentrating, stop and pull yourself together. Concentration and inattention are both largely a matter of habit, so why not make an effort to form the more useful one of those two habits?
10. During your practice, free your mind from any anxiety concerning the final results of your practice, either with regard to standards or deadlines.
11. Always try to approach the act of learning a new piece when you are as fresh as possible. Being overtired is a great hindrance to concentration. I practice in the morning.
12. Student brings a cassette to each lesson and takes it with him so he has all of my practice suggestions. If this is not possible, student should keep a notebook with practice suggestions.
13. Always be on the watch for signs of staleness. This usually reveals itself through a lack of interest in your piece or in the presence of more than the usual amount of inaccuracy.
14. In the earliest stages of learning anything new the rate of forgetting is very rapid. Therefore the maxim "Little and Often" in the early stages of learning is very important.
15. Sit still and sit up. Posture affects not only your audience but also your playing. Play to others often - as often as you can collect a private audience.