

# Practice Strategies

**Be Efficient!** Here are some ways to make good use of a practice session. Don't just play the stuff you already know!

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Say what?</i>	<i>Here's What You Do</i>
SLO MO	Slow motion. Slow it down. Get it right.	Play each challenging section as slow as you can. Try for accuracy in getting every note exactly right. Gradually speed it up once you've got it.
CHUNK IT	Break down the music into small parts.	Break each section down into 1 or 2 note tidbits. Once you play these notes right, add 1 more, then 1 more, and 1 more...
PENCIL POWER	Write it in ( <i>but not with pen!</i> )	A 5-cent pencil can save you hundreds of hours of frustration.
RULE OF FIVE	Play each tough section through 5 times perfectly in a row. " <i>Practice until you can't get it wrong.</i> "	Play the difficult section through 5 times in a row without making any mistakes. If you can't play it 5 times perfectly, go back and start over at number 1 and try again, and again, and again...
THINK IT, SEE IT, DO IT!	Practice without your instrument.	Put your instrument in its case. Try tapping the rhythm on your lap or the coffee table. Play an imaginary air instrument while you move your fingers along. Try blowing and tonguing (or sticking) as if you were actually playing.
FORGETTA'BOUT IT	Play something you can do well then come back to the challenging section.	Having trouble? De-stress by playing something you can do really well (Hot Cross Buns, anyone?). Once you feel good again, hit the challenging sections.
IDOL AUDITION	<b>Sing</b> it through. Belt it out!	Maybe you're not the next American Idol ( <i>or maybe you are!</i> ), but singing a passage out loud as if no one is listening will make you better faster. <b>Try</b> to sing the same pitches as your instrument.
RECORD YOURSELF	Get a computer, phone, iPad, or some other recording device. Listen to what you REALLY sound like!	So maybe you're not going to impress your dog or any record executives, but listening to yourself on a recording is a great way to hear what's really coming out of your instrument.
PERFORM FOR OTHERS!	Skype, facetime, or even small live performances will boost your confidence.	Play for someone that loves you unconditionally. Set up a recital atmosphere where you are the center of attention. Your parents, grandparents, friends, and even your teachers want to hear you.