

Best Practices for Getting the Most Out of Your Lessons

Show Up Early: Arriving to your lesson early will give you the opportunity to tune, relax, and get warmed up if you'd like. Arriving early to your lesson will help make this a time of calm and excellence in a hectic world.

Keep a Music Journal: A music journal will help you accomplish goals that you create with your teacher. A journal can help you document your progress and keep away feelings of discouragement that bubble to the surface when a student doesn't feel the progress they desire. It will also help your teacher remember what you are working on since every student has a different set of problems to overcome. Finally, it's a great place to write down questions and curiosities before you forget.

Bring Organized Materials: Having organized materials helps keep you focused. When you're working on a piece of music, make sure to bring some documentation about that piece and a way to take notes on it to the lesson. This is even more important if you don't keep a music journal.

Keep Instruments In Cases: Traveling to your lesson with your instrument in a case will help it stay in tune so that less of the lesson time will be spent on tuning your instrument.

Make Recordings: Use your technology to customize your lessons. Filming a technique or recording a performance can remind you of things that might slip your mind after the lesson.

Best Practices for Getting the Most Out of Your Practice Time

Break Up Your Session: Don't spend all of your session on one thing. I find it's best - in the long run - to separate practice from play. Practice time is difficult. It should challenge your abilities and patience. Playtime is fun. You should reward your hard work by enjoying the beautiful sounds you've learned to create.

Have Multiple (Shorter) Sessions in a Day: Instead of practicing for an hour or two, consider making two sessions about half the length. It gives you a chance to stop and come back with fresh ears/fingers. Recalling a technique a second time in your day will help you remember what you practiced the next day.

Be Efficient with Practice: When practicing, try to get the most out of the hard work you're putting in. Focus on the things you are trying to improve or change. Any exercise will be good for a while, but you'll need to move on to more challenging or broader engaging exercises as you improve.

Be Explorative with Play: Just enjoy the fruits of your labor. Allow yourself to play anything you want with no reason whatsoever. Try out every idea you come up with and learn what you find interesting about music. The only rules here are the ones you make up.

Best Practices for Keeping Your Instruments & Gear in Good Condition

Quick Clean After Use: At the end of your playing session, wipe off the areas of the instrument you touched during your playing session. This will keep your instrument feeling clean and easy to play.

Keep Instruments In Cases: Keep your instrument safe from changing temperature, pressure, and humidity. It will go out of tune slower and require less maintenance.

Thorough Clean at Regular Intervals: Every now and then it's good to clean up your instrument more thoroughly. Most professionals have this done once a month, but most folks can get away with it every 3-6 months. You can do this yourself or you can have it done by a professional.

Professional Tune Ups: Professionals will clean up your instrument and help it stay in its best possible playing condition. This is often done with a string change, a high quality cleaning, and a check up for any problems that might be building up slowly over time.