

WMS BAND

HOW TO PRACTICE

- Practice Techniques WITH A METRONOME -

Write the counting:

Rhythm is often the NUMBER ONE aspect of music that confuses a student. Before you stress or begin practice, take the time to neatly write in the counting under or over the music. COUNT & CLAP WITH A METRONOME AS WELL!!!

Break it up:

Music should be broken into smaller pieces for easier “digestion”. You can break it up into:

- 1.) Groups of measures (4, or 2)
- 2.) One measure
- 3.) Groups of beats (2)
- 4.) One beat

Find the error:

- 1.) Identify the error
- 2.) Isolate the error (start slow and begin to increase speed)
- 3.) Repeat and play correctly 3 times
- 4.) Connect back into context

Slow it down:

Sometimes music can be improved by simply slowing it down. Here are Mr. Downer’s FAVORITE tempi:

60, 65, 72, 80, 84, 90, 96, 100, 108, 112, 120, 126, 132, 144, 152, 160, 172, 180

Don’t skip tempi. Don’t move to the next without playing perfectly 3-5 times in a row.

Change the rhythm:

Whenever you encounter a “string” of 8th-note or 16th-note technique, it can be easily improved by altering the rhythm! Follow the steps below:

- 1.) Leave your metronome at the same tempo.
- 2.) DOUBLE the rhythm. (8th notes to quarter notes. 16th notes to 8th notes.)
- 3.) Long/Short
- 4.) Short/Long
- 5.) As written

Remove the slur:

Slurs can often make musical passages difficult to perform. Simply removing the slur can make things a lot easier. After you feel like you’ve truly mastered the passage articulated... add the slur back in.

Stack it in:

A second technique for practicing a long string of 8th notes or 16th notes can be used to help you learn!

- 1.) Leave your metronome at the same tempo.

- 2.) Simply start by playing the first note only.
- 3.) Add the second note by playing both the first and 2nd (in rhythm and @ tempo).
- 4.) Continue, adding one note at a time until all notes have been added.
- 5.) Don't EVER forget that you can stack entire measures of music as they're learned!

Stop and hold:

Sometimes a note can be difficult to achieve with accuracy, difficult to play with a quality tone, or difficult to tune! Use this technique to fix notes like this:

- 1.) Leave your metronome at the same tempo.
- 2.) Begin playing at the beginning of the measure.
- 3.) When you arrive to the "problem note" simply stop on it and hold it out!

Stack and hold:

The same as "Stack it in", but with holding out the most recently added pitch! One of Mr. Downer's favorite practice techniques.

Back and forth:

Sometimes it can be difficult to transition from one particular note to another. Either because of tricky fingerings/slide positions or a change in register. Simply going back and forth between the two pitches can really help.

- 1.) Leave your metronome at the same tempo.
- 2.) Play the notes back and forth for varying numbers of beats.
- 3.) Start with many beats on each pitch and move towards fractions of a beat.

Play it backwards:

If you're looking to REALLY know your stuff, try nearly any of the practice techniques above... BACKWARDS! Learning to play small passages of music backwards not only makes it easier to play forwards, but helps you become a better music reader!

**The better you can read music, the easier and more fun
future music becomes!**