

Practice Guidelines

- **Find time:** While the quality of your practice is more important than the quantity, you will need to devote a significant amount of time each day to your instrument. It's up to you to determine how much practice is enough, based on your own lifestyle. Whatever you choose, try to be consistent day-to-day, and try to practice at a time when you are mentally alert. If you are in school, this might mean getting up early to practice before your classes.
- **Set yourself up for success:** Make sure you are in an environment where you can focus. Find a room with no other people, no pets, and no TV to distract you. Put away your phone or put it on airplane mode. If possible, play in front of a full-length mirror, so that you can monitor your posture.
- **Make goals:** When you go into a practice session, have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish. Make sure your goals are realistic: if you only have half an hour to practice, you shouldn't plan to cover more than your technical exercises and one piece of repertoire. Always do at least 10 minutes of technical exercises a day in order to keep your fingers in shape. **Use the accompanying weekly practice log to record your goals and keep yourself on track throughout the week.**
- **Make sub-goals:** Within each piece, define your areas for improvement. Approach each of them in isolation. Possible sub-goals for any given piece are...
 - Left hand coordination/intonation
 - Bow distribution
 - Articulation/bow changes
 - Vibrato
 - Sound quality
 - Big picture phrasing
- **Pay attention:** You will see the most day-to-day improvement if you give your full attention to your instrument. *Actively* listen to the sounds you are producing as you play; be thorough and critical. If you catch yourself playing on "automatic pilot", try to recenter and play with renewed vigor. Some days, your mind may just not want to focus, no matter what. It's ok to take the day off if you feel like you're hitting a wall.
- **Use a metronome:** The metronome is beneficial for almost every aspect of a practice session. Play your scales and exercises with it to prevent from rushing. Use it to build up tricky passages in your repertoire from half tempo to full tempo. Refer to it when you feel your rhythmic pulse might be unsteady.

I, _____, agree to try my best to practice in accordance with the guidelines above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Practice Log

Lesson date: _____

Repertoire for the next week:

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 1. _____ | Goal: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Goal: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Goal: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Goal: _____ |

Day 1 (day after lesson):

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |

Day 2:

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |

Day 3:

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |

Day 4:

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |

Post-Day 4 check in: how are your weekly goals going? _____

Day 5:

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |

Day 6 (day before lesson):

Agenda for the day:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 2. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 3. _____ | Time spent: _____ |
| 4. _____ | Time spent: _____ |