



Practice Agenda

Before:

Goal = prepare yourself and your resources for a successful practice session

- Stretch out hands, arms, shoulders, back, etc.
- Organize music & materials for practice
- Ensure pencil, metronome, tuner, note paper, etc. are accessible
- Clip left hand fingernails & file/sand right hand fingernails if necessary
- Wash hands before touching instrument
- Wipe down your strings/guitar with a clean polishing cloth –ensure the best sound possible
- Briefly review goals you set from your last practice session to drive today's practice session

Tune:

Goal = prepare your instrument for successful music making

- Tune your guitar –use an app, electronic tuner, or A-440 tuning fork
- Practice harmonic tuning skills

Short Warm-up (slowly and relaxed –without metronome):

Goal = perfectly align your hand and fingers and the amount of energy needed for optimal music making

- Light right hand arpeggios and sustained/smooth right hand blocked chords
- Discover the perfect amount of left-hand energy by using the “buzzing” technique
- Light left-hand slurs –use perfect positioning and least energy possible
- Light scales –use perfect positioning and least energy possible (“buzz” on strings at first)
- Relaxed coordination exercises
- Relaxed and slow finger placement exercises

Intensive Technique Practice (with metronome):

Goal = build mental and physical reflex-like motions using optimal tone quality

- Right hand arpeggios, tremolo, right hand patterns, etc.
- Left hand slurs –ascending and descending
- Scales and slurred scales, speed studies, etc.
- Left hand arpeggios, left hand extensions, left hand shifts, string noise avoidance, etc.
- Chords and inversions, repetitive chords, etc.
- Strumming and other right-hand picking patterns, etc.
- Harmonics (both artificial and natural)
- Difficult musical passages –break them into short repetitive exercises
- Musical studies designed with a specific musical or physically challenging feature (i.e., trills, slurs, shifts, tremolo, scales, chords, balancing melody and accompaniment, etc.)

Music Practice:

Goal = improve the quality and quantity of music that you can perform

- *Extremely slow* metronome work on pieces –execute perfect finger and hand motions required to play pieces perfectly (40-50bpm)
- Work on increasing tempos of pieces that can already be played perfectly at slow tempos
- Maintenance work on pieces that you can already perform –work on trouble spots if any
- Performance practice –play *and record* pieces at performance tempo and evaluate your performance –note areas needing improvement
- Sight read and explore new music to add to the list of pieces you can play
- Perform one piece from memory that you love to play –this will end your session on a positive note regardless of how well or poorly your practice session went

After:

Goal = set goals and agenda for new practice session

- Take 3-5 minutes to review your practice session and note areas needing improvement
- Set achievable goals for next practice session and write them down