

Tips for Beginners

by
Roy Ernst

Posture

Sit in a chair with a straight back and no arms. Move your back slightly forward from the chair and sit up straight. Keep your head up. The purpose is to maximize the space that your lungs have to expand.

Breathing

Practice breathing without your instrument. Take a full breath, expanding around your abdomen. Your shoulders should not rise. Put your lips together and let your breath push them apart to make a small opening as you blow. Take deep, full breaths. Breathe and blow, first blowing for a slow count of four, then six, then eight, then ten. Practice this several times a day.

Embouchure

Review the instructions and photos in your method book. Practice in front of a large mirror to be sure your embouchure is correct.

Hand position

Review the instructions and photos in your method book. Use a large mirror to check your hand position. Keep your fingers close to the keys.

Practicing

When you are first learning to make tones, you will not be able to practice for more than 5-10 minutes. Keep your instrument in a convenient place and practice at least 2-3 times each day. Establish a daily practice schedule instead of just practicing whenever you think of it.

Reading Music

Sing or say the notes before you play them on your instrument. You can sing “du” for each note and hold the sound for the number of counts the note should have.

Keep a steady beat by making a small tapping movement with your foot.

Practice associating note names with fingerings without making a sound by saying the name of each note and putting down the correct fingering for that note.

Benefits of Learning to Play Music

Your brain gets a great workout when you practice music. You are also starting on a life-long path of playing music with other people, which will bring you much joy and health benefits.