

Summary of the main points in

The Art of Practice

Developing good practice skills can be an art form in itself. What we practice and how we practice are very important to ones development as a musician.

WHAT DO YOU PRACTICE?

This will be different for everyone depending on your stage of musical development and what you need in order to move forward. Here are some ideas and recommendations:

- 1 - Practice whatever you need to do a better job on the gigs you are currently playing. You will have some relevant ideas to work on by remembering what songs or feels you had trouble with, listening to a recording of the gig or by using feedback from the other band members.
- 2 - I recommend studying with a good private teacher to learn how to read music, develop good technique, be exposed to interesting ideas and approaches, and to get clear and instant feedback on your progress. By studying with a teacher you can also develop good practice discipline because you'll need to prepare a weekly lesson.
- 3 - Use your practice time to work on and develop your own ideas.
- 4 - Use your practice time to learn music and prepare for an upcoming gig, session or audition.
- 5 - Work on an idea that interests you that you read about in a magazine or that you hear someone play on a CD, a live gig/clinic or an educational DVD/video.

HOW DO YOU PRACTICE?

Here are some practicing principles I use that have helped me continue to grow as a player.

- 1 - **Practice Every Day** with an occasional day off.
- 2 - **Be Organized and Consistent** - know what you are going to practice each day and stick to the plan.
- 3 - **Use Patience** and Take Your Time.
- 4 - **Practice Quietly and Slowly**. By doing this you gain control at many Volumes and Tempos.
- 5 - **Figure out the Stickings and Hand/Foot combinations**. With this process you gain an understanding of the information in the idea. With Consistent, Slow and Relaxed practice you allow the information to enter your subconscious.
- 6 - **Slowly work out the motions** necessary to play the ideas and eventually allow the motions start to "play themselves."
- 7 - **Breath slowly, relax and use the practice as a meditation**. Develop the habit of playing relaxed, don't hold tension in your body. Use a mirror to watch your motions.
- 8 - Eventually "**hear**" the idea in your head and allow your body to respond and play it effortlessly.
- 9 - **Practice with Musical Form**, (e.g. 4 & 8 bar phrases, 12 bar blues, 32 bar AABA song form) play along with CDs, and practice both with and without a click track.
- 10 - **Warm up** before the practice session, stop when fatigued.