

20 Ways to cure technique

If you keep play wrong notes, you're unfamiliar with the piece. Truth. It's not that you're a bad flute player or bad person or anything...except that, you're unfamiliar. Here's some help for when you feel like spending 20 minutes getting something accomplished with that sticky phrase, instead of thinking "I'll get to that later." - Amy Porter

Play backwards slowly. Like, really, really, slowly. Slurred. Not only does it create a new melody for the day, but you might hear a chord progression you might not have otherwise heard.

Long-short // short-long otherwise known as dotted rhythms.

Change your surface. Slur the passage if it's tongued. Tongue it if it's slurred. That's honesty for you.

Triplets. Play it in sincere triplets - separated, not run together. Otherwise they aren't triplets.

Groupings of your choice. You tend to make fun choices

Payments in pennies on the stand. Or dimes, or \$100 bills. Whatever it takes to move the \$ from one side of the stand to the other.

THE RULE OF SEVEN. Did you know it takes someone SEVEN times to hear something and REALLY do it or understand it? So - try something 7, or 25 or 100 times until you get it right. But if you make a mistake, you must go back to the beginning and begin at 1.

Sewing. Only play 2 notes, then thread in the next note (1,2, 3) then add the 4th note, then the 5th etc. etc. and gradually you've sewn the phrase together.

Long-short // short-long otherwise known as dotted rhythms.

S ...L...O... W P... L... A... Y... I... N... G . really really slow - working tempo, half-tempo, practice tempo, whatever you call it - if you don't know it, you are unfamiliar.

Playing fast - SLOWLY. Take small micro-phrases and play them fast and then add them to the next microphrase. Only go on when all those phrases are clean and clear. I cover this on my Karg-Elert DVD.

HOLD IT! Completely stop on the note that's perplexing you. This one works on all those E-flats in Mendelssohn's Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Memorize it. That's it. Look away from the music.

Look away from the music and just look at your keys. Finger the flute, watching carefully how the fingers move from one note to another. Neurons connect in the brain that wouldn't otherwise connect, because we are using our eyes as we finger the notes.

Solfege. ??? Yes. Using FIXED Do. It reminds us of the pitches and emblazens them on our brain. Seriously. Plus - you get to SING!

Analysis. Analyze the pitches, their relationships to each other and their chord structure. 9 times out of 10, you'll improve just by contemplating the form, like in theory class...

Evening Out- put ALL notes in the same octave. It's tricky as you go, but it helps the ear discern the pitches and, how maybe, you can hear the chord structure.

Double it - Double tongue subdividing or subdividing in general is an amazing tool. I do this on the slower Brahms' Symphony No. 4 solo in the 4th movement. If you break it up and subdivide, you can make sure you stay even in your technique. Face it - slow technique is HARD!

Transpose it. ??? Would you please start with the opening of Mozart's K. 313 and play it in as many keys as you can and tell me it doesn't make everything better? It's the best thing to transpose for "treble clef Divas."

Play it on the piano. Play the phrase on the keyboard and you'll see the intervals clearly. Play chords underneath and hold down the sustaining pedal. Play along, sing along, entertain yourself with this passage. The added benefit - it helps you understand that you can play the piano

Think for a living. There's how it goes - and there's how you THINK it goes - and we all need to play what the composer wrote. Everyone has to learn all the correct notes according to the the composer. If in error I learn a wrong note, I kick myself, move on and carry on knowing I learned and rethought... and then make steady agreements in my brain to never do it again.

My NOTES