

How to Practice

1. Before you start, make sure you have the following supplies:
 - Music books
 - Music folder
 - Pencil & Eraser
 - Your instrument & bow
 - Metronome/Tuner
2. Create a good practice environment with no distractions. (Example: Don't have the television or computer on while you practice.)
3. **When you practice, don't just play the song or exercise over and over.** If you keep making the same mistakes, your brain will remember the mistake and it will be harder to fix later on. Concentrate on the measures in the song you keep messing up. Follow these steps to figure out what you are doing wrong.
 - a. Check the rhythm. Are you playing the rhythm correctly? Are you staying with the beat? Clap & count the rhythm. Write in the rhythm, if necessary.
 - b. Check your fingering. Pizzicato the notes and check that you are playing the correct notes. Check the key signature & name each note. Write in the fingering or note names for notes you keep missing as you practice that section.
 - c. Check your bowing. Are you doing the bowing correctly?
4. **Always practice with good posture and good hand positions.** Check often!
5. **Practice in front of a mirror.** Check to make sure you are bowing straight and with good hand positions.
6. **Practice slowly!!!** Start slow and gradually speed up. Use a metronome to help you gradually increase the speed. The rule should be...when you can play a section (4-16 measures) perfectly three times in a row at a particular speed, then you may increase the speed slightly and try again.
7. You should start your practice time with whatever is the hardest for you to play.
8. End your practice time with a piece you know well or enjoy.
9. If you keep making the same mistake over and over, take a SHORT 1 or 2 minute break, then come back and try again.
10. **Remember, practicing correctly is the key...if you practice wrong, then you waste your time and it will take longer for you to learn something.**