

# The Practice Meal

*Practice is like a three-course meal: There is an appetizer, a main course, and a dessert.*

## **Appetizer**

*Warm-Up: 25% of your practice session*

*The music teachers will give you suggestions on your warm-up. Great ideas for warm-ups include:*

- Long tones (long notes - aim for big, consistent sounds)
- Scales (ex: slowly going up and down the notes/scales you are working on)
- Focus on a concept like tonguing, dynamics, or bowing

## **Main Course**

*What you need to work on and what was assigned to you: 50% of your practice session.*

*For your main course, consider practicing:*

- What has been assigned to you in class.
- What you found challenging in class.
- Any parts of your sheet music that you have not yet played at home.
- Concepts beyond pitches and rhythms: Dynamics, articulation, air support, tone, tuning, etc.

*"If your practice always sounds great, you're doing it wrong."*

*Consider using some of these techniques during your main course practice!*

- Slow-Mo:** Slowing down a difficult section.
- Chunk It:** Choose a challenging, small chunk of music (ex: 1 bar) to focus on.
- Loop It:** Loop a small section of music to play on repeat (once you have it correct).
- Only Rhythm:** Focus only on rhythm by saying or clapping rhythms, writing in rhythms, or playing a section on only one pitch.
- Only Pitch:** Focus only on pitch by saying pitches or by only playing pitches.
- Ghosting:** Play something without sound
- One Note at a Time:** Play the first note of a challenging section, then add one note at a time. Don't move on until it's correct.

## **Dessert**

*Finish your practice session with something fun and/or that you know well: 25% of your practice session*

- Play a song (or section of a song) that you know really well.
- Play a fun song that has not been assigned.
- Play an old song that you know really well.

## **Extras**

*The below activities also count as practice:*

- Listening (and playing along) to a recording of the piece you are working on.
- Working on note identification (online!)
- Playing with friends.
- Figuring out a song by ear!
- Improvising!

## **Setting the Table**

*Ideally, your practice space:*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Is quiet and distraction-free</li><li>● Has a music stand</li><li>● Has a chair without arms</li><li>● Has a pencil</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Allows you to play with a full sound</li><li>● Has some sort of metronome (metronome app, drum app, physical metronome)</li><li>● Has a tuner (for string players)</li></ul> |
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