Brookfield Music

Music for a happy heart

PRACTICE TIPS

How to have fun and save fights over practice

These tips are designed to help you develop good practice habits with your family.

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Tip 1

Help set up a routine with your child - before school, after school, weekend.

Children love routine. Making practice a habit is the best way to make quick progress and develop as a musician.

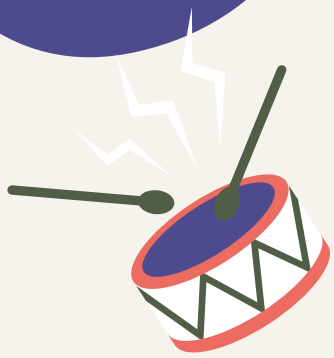
Sit down with your child and ask them when they think they'll enjoy playing music. Are they morning people or would after school work better?

Put a practice timetable on the fridge or bedroom door so they can see it.

It doesn't need to be the same time every day as long there is a routine.

Think about the age of your child. Little ones are more than often wide awake early in the morning. Teenagers often prefer to play their music at night after dinner.

Tip 2



Set up a music corner so they have easy access to music, working instrument and tools of the trade.

ie stand, tuner, metronome, and backing music.

Some children thrive on practising in the living room others like their bedroom (especially teenagers).

Keep an eye out for distractions around the music area.

THINGS OUR STUDENTS HAVE TOLD US WHY THEY DON'T PRACTICE.

"I don't want to go downstairs it's scary by myself"

"I don't want any one to hear me practice"

"I can't practice, the keyboard is in my brother's room and he won't let me go in there"

"One note on my instrument isn't working so I don't want to play"

"My sister tells me I suck"

"I had to watch TV"

Tip 3

Show your enthusiasm for their learning. Have a mini family concert at the end of practice once a week.

This point is particularly meaningful for younger students 4-12yrs old. Music is very social. Before TVs everyone gathered around the piano together or the radio to listen to music.

Children thrive on positive feedback. Let them know how much you love hearing them play and create music.

Let them overhear you telling other family members how great they are.

Have a mini-concert for grandparents online! Let them see how much joy music spreads. Music connects the generations.

Your child loves spending time with you. Make these moments happen before the teenage years arrive.

Tip 4

Little ones may need help with practice to learn the skills 4-12yrs, older ones will become more and more self-motivated.

Talk with your teacher about the exact tips that will help your child practice at home.

Play with backings.

Never just play a piece from beginning to end. Select repetition is the best way to practice

Notes

- Check, are there any new notes (look them up or ask)
- Choose 3 notes repeat several times, then do 4, 5 6 until the tricky bit becomes easy

Rhythm

- Write in the beats
- Simplify the rhythm
- Practice slowly
- Say and tap the original rhythm
- Play

Articulation

- Play without articulation
- Play all slurred/all tongued/all staccato
- Play as written

Look at your piece of music. Circle the tricky bits.
Choose one circle. Why is it tricky?
Try the following: When the tricky bit becomes easy play a whole section and see if you have fixed it.

YES Practice Makes Perfect

Tip 5

Make practice a habit. Playing music is so much fun there is always time for fun!

Start with 10 mins and increase as the skill set grows. What's most important is GOOD habits and GOOD practice.

Things to think about:

- How often will your child practice? Minimum 5 days a week is recommended.
- Decide with your teacher how long your child should practice in each session.
- Set achievable goals for each practice.
- Aim for progress, not perfection.
- Quality of practice is more important than quantity.
- Use an app for theory, scales, ear training, rhythm training or note reading practice.

Be consistent with a practice time to develop a habit. The more practice happens the more intrinsically motivated your child will be to practice without you needing to remind them.

I hope you've found these tips helpful.
Best wishes for lots of music making.

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