

Ten Prescriptions for Productive Practice

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From the Lowdown with Dr. D column on No Treble:

<http://www.notreble.com/buzz/2013/12/16/ten-prescriptions-for-productive-practice>

To help us get the most out of our sessions, here are ten principles for productive practice:

1. For best results, practice 6 days a week.

- Less than six, especially on a regular basis, and you'll be playing "catch-up" too often
- More than six and most folks will find themselves burning out

2. Schedule your practice session the day before.

- When you wake up you should already know when you are going to practice that day.
- Show up on time. Treat it like a class, or job.

3. Plan your sessions beforehand.

- Have goals for each session.
- Know what you are going to practice before you walk into the room.
- In general, the more detailed your plan the better.

4. Be mindful every minute you are practicing. Otherwise, stop.

- Mindless practice is not helpful. Rather, it is wasteful and sometimes harmful.
- If you can't concentrate during your practice session, you might as well do something else.

5. No phones, email or other distractions in the practice room.

- Really. Don't let facebook alerts, text messages or phone calls into the room.

6. Technique matters.

- Address the basics every day.
- Be aware of your body and move efficiently .

7. Repetition is important....

- but only if it is mindful and purpose-driven.

8. Slow practice is fast practice.

- Don't play a passage too fast too soon. Rather play it well, and then speed it up.

9. When there is a technical problem, look to the basics for the answer.

- Is the bow placement correct?
- Is the left hand too tight?
- Do we know the distance of that shift?
- Etc., etc.

10. No note is free.

- Every note requires that you pay attention, even the ones you think are "easy."