

Susan Williams
PRACTICE CARDS

The following is a collection of practice tools in the form of cards – each describing a practice tool – to download, cut out & put on the music stand. Only by experimenting with them, will you get to know which ones work best for what. Using several different tools and methods for a single task or section of music is preferable to only using one or two. The main thing is that you stay alert and engaged. Check after one or several days to see if and how the skill or piece of music has developed.

List of tools:

Random Practice
Varied Practice
Practicing in Flow
APT [Audiation Practice Tool]
Desirable difficulties
Exploring tonality
Grow a sound
Super slow

How to use the tools

- ❖ Intention: Decide what skill/piece/segment you want to work on
- ❖ Exploration: Use one or more tools to explore the section, play with them
- ❖ Engagement: Notice if you are engaged, bored or stressed
- ❖ Adjust: Change the method or task accordingly
- ❖ Make your own tools and cards & make cards out of tools suggested by your teacher

Random Practice

- Play difficult fragments or phrases randomly
- Play each fragment once and move to another
- Repeat fragments but not directly {e.g. ABCBDAC etc.)

Goal: staying alert and practicing getting it right the first time

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Varied Practice

Play different versions of a phrase

- Vary the character of the phrase
- Try different articulations, colours, effects
- Play it in the 'opposite' way it is intended
- Play it in a different key, or with different fingerings

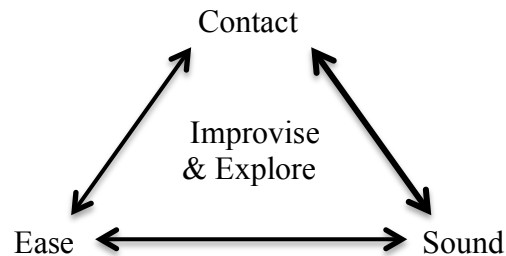
Goal: to broaden your technical repertoire and context

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Practicing in Flow

Shift your attention between contact, sound and ease



Goal: to be in the moment

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APT

[Audiation Practice Tool]

Choose a section of music

- **Imagine** the phrase you are about to play with as much nuance as you can evoke (pitch, tone quality, volume, articulation, transition from one note to another...)
- **Sing and gesture** the phrase dramatically
- **Play** the phrase
- Play **another version(s)** of the phrase

Goal: focusing on the meaning of the music

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Desirable difficulties

Make a section or piece even more difficult. E.g.:

- Faster
- Exaggerating dynamics: louder/softer
- Higher
- Transpose into a difficult key
- Play through twice

Goal: to push your boundaries (technical, physical, mental)

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Grow a sound

- Play a tone or short fragment
- Develop it slowly and gradually, step by step by adding and changing
- Finish by connecting to the beginning

Goal: Practicing improvisation & developing musical freedom

(From Thomas Jaderlund)

Exploring Tonality

In the mode/scale of a chosen phrase:

- Start by slowly playing the scale up and down
- Explore it by varying speed, rhythm, colour, dynamics
- Take a minute of focused silence
- Develop an improvisation based your phrase

Goal: Getting more familiar with a particular tonality
(An alternative to mindless repetition of scales)

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Super Slow

Play a section extremely slowly

- Bring awareness to each shift from one sound and movement to the next
- Take out the rhythm and savour each note
- Shift back and forward between difficult intervals, feeling the difference & the transition

Goal: to get to know a section of music – ‘get it into your body’

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