

# ***Practice Tips for the Young (and Old) Musician***

***Ben Wahlund (www.blackdogmusicstudio.com)***

- **Establish a good practice environment** where interruptions and distractions are minimized. Other family members should be encouraged not to disturb you during practice time.
- **Always stay relaxed** when practicing or performing. It is often helpful to try giving yourself “relaxation” challenges.
- **Know your goal:** have a clear idea of what you hope to accomplish and a timeframe to accomplish it in.
- **“Divide and conquer”:** break the task into easily accomplished small bits.
- **Use the metronome:** it is like your best friend, the one who is honest with you when it counts the most.
- **Be methodical** in your work. This means working very, very slowly sometimes.
- **Be “hyper-observant”:** listening carefully and watching carefully will reveal new, more helpful goals.
- **Finish the job:** the most difficult practicing is that which raises *good* to *excellent*.
- **Establish a regular practice routine:** 20 minutes a day every day is much better than 1 hour a day but only twice a week. If you do find yourself in a longer practice session than normal, schedule a break time(s).
- **Take care of things outside of the practice room** so that they don’t cloud your judgment in the practice room.
- **Don’t beat yourself up.** It is tempting to do, but useless to spend energy yelling at yourself.

***Always see to it that your job as a musician is to give rise to the joy of making music.***