

ON PRACTICING

90% of your playing time in your early years is spent practicing **by yourself!** To progress rapidly you have to be proficient at coaching yourself.

The most valuable coach you have is yourself. I am teaching you in every moment of every lesson to become your own best coach.

You can also get help and guidance from school teachers, band and orchestra conductors, classmates, and audition, festival or contest adjudicators. Even more helpful: **listening to great music and musicians.** That's why I give you those recordings of Great Saxophonists or Great Clarinetists.

This input will help you form a clear idea of how you want to sound. When your objectives are clear to your ears, the instrument itself can teach you to play! That will only happen if you listen intently when you practice and focus on tone colour first. Intonation is next, but you can NOT have great in-**tone**-ation without great **tone**.

Articulation, rhythm and phrasing follow closely behind. You will know exactly what you want to achieve, and you will improve the efficiency of your practice. As your listening improves, your ability to guide yourself will improve.

You should be practicing at least an hour a day. Band practices or music classes do not count as practice.

Concentration comes in small doses and unconcentrated practice does not develop you. At the end of an overly long practice session your embouchure will tire out and lead you into poor playing habits. Take a break if you need it. If you are practicing properly, it is mentally very tiring!

Study the style of the music, and play expressively with exaggerated dynamics. Consider problems one at a time, not all at once. Avoid **deaf practice**. **Deaf practice** occurs when you do not listen carefully to what you are playing and you ignore your objectives.

Think about your objectives and write a practice plan! Include what time you practice every day in that plan. Think about your tone and keep it first in your ear's imagination. Discover how to release the reed to give each note a precise start. Develop accurate rhythm. Train your fingers to move smoothly, slowly and softly.

Practice micro-moments of the music. Focus down to the smallest possible areas of glitches and bobbles and then expand to before and after those musical moments. Slow down your metronome and **listen** with excruciating focus. But...listen non-judgmentally. Don't allow Self 2 to beat up Self 1 (from *The Inner Game of Music*). Be a dispassionate observer who observes closely. You will find that extremely intent listening fixes problems before they occur.

You say you want to become a great player? What are you prepared to do?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPZ6eaL3S2E>

Here are practice routines that two fine students worked out for themselves with guidance from me. They have proved immensely beneficial to their progress. I recommend you use it as a template and share it with me!

Henry W Clarinet Self-Practice Plan

Total Time: 45 minutes of uninterrupted, focused practice.

0 Minutes - 2 Minutes: Mouthpiece Blowing, Long Tones, legato tonguing, staccato tonguing (2 minutes)

2 minutes - 5 minutes: Long tones, legato tonguing, staccato tonguing on three notes, one in the chalumeau, one in the clarion, one in the altissimo (3 minutes)

5 minutes to 8 minutes: left and right pinky walkarounds, one day in the low register, next day in the middle register (3 minutes)

8 minutes to 10 minutes: chromatic scale, varying daily between duples, triplets and sixteenths with different “pickup” note entrances (2 minutes)

10 minutes to 12 minutes: over the break A to B, Bb to C (2 minutes)

10 minutes to 17 minutes: Scales, arpeggios, thirds...pick one key and really work it (7 minutes)

17 - 27 minutes: 2 Études (Maximize tone quality/musicality over quantity) (10 minutes)

27 minutes to 45 minutes: repertoire: work on very small sections that are the very hardest. (18 minutes)

27 - 36 minutes: Sounds of Spring (9 mins)

- focus on playing marcato accents in a lively manner without squeaking, with good articulation and quality of sound
- use the breathing tube to help you if your throat is closed

36 - 45 minutes: Loch Lomond (9 minutes)

- focus on open throat (breathing tube) and correct pitch for high clarion notes
- take in bigger breaths (for longer, flowing phrases)

Practice Schedule

Monday 3:30 after school in practice room

Tuesday 12:00 lunch hour at school

Wednesday 7:30 after dinner

Thursday 3:30 after school in practice room

Friday 7:30 after dinner

Saturday 8 am

Sunday 10 am

Adrian Holburn Practice Plan - Saxophone:

TIME DATA:

- 45 minutes duration
- One practice duration per day

PRACTICE SUBDURATIONS:

0 minutes - 1 minute: *Mouthpiece Work*

EXERCISES:

- Mouthpiece long tones
- Mouthpiece legato tonguing
- Mouthpiece staccato tonguing, building 16th notes gradually in speed from 108 beats per minute to 144 beats per minute.

OBJECTIVES:

- Air support
- Open throat
- Big breaths

DURATION: *1 minutes*

1 minute - 3 minutes: *Tone Warmup*

EXERCISES:

- Long tones, in all three registers
- Legato tonguing, in all three registers
- Staccato tonguing, with the same speed objectives, in all three registers

OBJECTIVES:

- Air support
- Open throat
- Big breaths

DURATION: *2 minutes*

3 minutes - 5 minutes: *Connected Long Tones*

EXERCISES:

- Tonic and dominant octaves

OBJECTIVES:

- Smooth octave jumps

DURATION: *2 minutes*

5 minutes - 12 minutes: *Technique*

EXERCISES:

- Scales
- Turnaround scales
- Thirds
- Arpeggios

OBJECTIVES:

- Clean finger movement
- Smooth note jumps

DURATION: *7 minutes*

NOTES:

- Work around the circle of fifths, nailing one key per week. Then use random scale generator to select key, adjusting ratio of major keys to minor keys by -0.025:+0.025 each day starting at 4:1 until 2:3 is reached (including separation for natural, harmonic, and melodic minors)
- Focus on getting *all* exercises in the given key perfect; up to 10 minutes is acceptable if necessary, extending the total practice duration to fit.
- 3-to-the-8th-Power is supplementary, and should only be done if time permits

12 minutes - 15 minutes: *Chromatic and Blues Scales***EXERCISES:**

- Chromatic scales
- Blues scales

OBJECTIVES:

- Gradually increase ability in chromatic and blues regions

DURATION: 3 minutes**NOTES:**

- Use randomizer to select between chromatic and blues, and to select blues key
- Prioritize ***Technique*** section; if extra time is needed in ***Technique*** take it out of this section without increasing total practice time.

15 minutes - 25 minutes: *Etudes***EXERCISES:**

- Two etudes - rotate through etudes every lesson

OBJECTIVES:

- Ingrain classical and/or jazz tone, patterns, and style into playing

DURATION: 10 minutes (5 minutes per etude, skewed if necessary)**25 minutes - 45 minutes: *Repertoire*****EXERCISES:**

- Hardest pieces, prioritized based on current need

OBJECTIVES:

- Eliminate difficult sections
- Ensure good sound throughout pieces

DURATION: 20 minutes (more if necessary, or drop ***Etudes*** and commit that time to ***Repertoire***)

OVERALL PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

Date:	SAXOPHONE PRACTICE SESSION			HORN PRACTICE SESSION		
	Timeslot:	Focus:	Notes:	Timeslot:	Focus:	Notes:
WEEK 1:						
Mon Sep 23, 2019	N/A (taken by both bands and theory)			N/A (taken by both bands and theory)		
Tue Sep 24, 2019	1535 to 1620	Weatherman's Dilemma	Read again; then weird triplet things	1800 to 1845	Implementing changes from Nina	
Wed Sep 25, 2019	1535 to 1620	The Peanut Vendor	Taking it slow; build up to speed (focus on annoying B-accidental switches)	1800 to 1830	De Meij	Belltone section; taking big breaths
Thu Sep 26, 2019	1535 to 1620	The Peanut Vendor	See above	1800 to 1830	Grainger CG	Solo - triplet slur at beginning; consistency
Fri Sep 27, 2019	1535 to 1620	Fowl Play	Ending; cleaning up any tricky bits in the middle	1800 to 1830	Range building	Solidifying high range notes
Sat Sep 28, 2019	N/A (playing in Premier Jazz)			1900 to 1930	Whatever needs work	
Sun Sep 29, 2019	1500 to 1545	Weatherman's Dilemma	Scan for any more hard things	N/A (playing in SWE)		
WEEK 2:						
Mon Sep 30, 2019	N/A (taken by both bands and theory)			N/A (taken by both bands and theory)		
Tue Oct 01, 2019	1530 to 1600	Scanning all pieces	Check anything that's still hard; practice it in following days	1800 to 1845	Implementing changes from Nina	
Wed Oct 02, 2019	1530 to 1600	Practicing new hard stuff		1800 to 1830	Whatever needs work	
Thu Oct 03, 2019	1530 to 1600	Practicing new hard stuff		1800 to 1830	Whatever needs work	
Fri Oct 04, 2019	1530 to 1600	Practicing new hard stuff		1800 to 1830	Whatever needs work	
Sat Oct 05, 2019	N/A (playing in Premier Jazz)			1900 to 1930	Whatever needs work	
Sun Oct 06, 2019	1500 to 1530	Implementing changes from Nina		N/A (playing in SWE)		