

How to Practice



Practicing consists of four key elements:

1

Setup

2

Warm-Up

3

Technique Building

4

Repertoire

Setup (2–5 minutes)

1 Preparation

- Remove instrument and bow from case
- Tighten bow hair, apply 3–4 swipes of rosin if needed
- Attach shoulder rest, if using (violin/viola)
- Extend endpin to appropriate length (cello/double bass)
- Prepare practice space with a pencil, metronome, tuner, and music stand
- Tune instrument

Warm-Up (5–10 minutes)

2 Preparation

- Sitting or standing up straight, feet flat on the floor
- Arms, neck, and shoulders loose
- Correct bow hold, with loose fingers

Exercises

- Stretches of arms, neck, back, hands, and fingers
- Playing all four open strings, with long and full bows
- Alternating placing left hand fingers in playing position and releasing

Technique Building (15–30 minutes)

3 Preparation:

- Increasing reading speed: flash cards of note types, note names, etc.
- Rhythm: exercises in counting and clapping
- Clean finger transitions: perfectly smooth transition between notes
- Even, open bow strokes: pure, smooth tone (on each note, between intervals, using vibrato, etc.)
- Intonation: using a tuner, play scales or slower excerpts focusing on pitch accuracy

Exercises

- Flash Cards (notes, musical terms, etc)
- Rhythm Exercises
- Scales
- Arpeggios
- Bow Articulations
- Vibrato

Repertoire (20–45 minutes)

4 Class/Lesson Assignments

- Études, solos, ensemble music, excerpts, etc.
- See 'Practice Techniques' page for more tips on perfecting repertoire.