How to Practice

Practicing consists of four key elements:

1. Setup (2–5 minutes)
   - 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

2. Warm-Up (5–10 minutes)
   - 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

3. Technique Building (15–30 minutes)
   - 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

4. Repertoire (20–45 minutes)
   - Class/Lesson Assignments
     - Études, solos, ensemble music, excerpts, etc.
     - See ‘Practice Techniques’ page for more tips on perfecting repertoire.