

Developing A Practice Routine

By Ben Peterson
www.petersontrumpet.com

Having a practice routine helps develop consistency in your playing and makes it easier to be dedicated to steady improvement on the trumpet. In addition, it can help you avoid developing bad habits or even injuries through poor preparation.

The first thing to determine is how much time you have to devote to practice each day. In addition to that, does one long session or several shorter sessions best benefit your needs and time demands? Often, several shorter sessions can be an excellent way to fit a great deal of practice into a busy schedule. However, for the purposes of this essay, a single session process is easier to describe.

A crucial part of any practice session is the warm-up. Establishing good habits and technique in this portion of the routine is vital to making them an involuntary part of your playing. A good warm-up can include breathing exercises, mouthpiece buzzing, long tones, and lip slurs. Take your time on each of these until you feel focused and relaxed.

After warming up, it is important to make working on the fundamentals of technique a regular part of each session. Lip flexibility, single and multiple tonguing, fingering exercises (scale patterns), range exercises, and transpositions are all great areas to focus on in order to improve your overall level of trumpet playing.

Once you have warmed up and addressed fundamentals, take some time to work on literature and performance. Etude books, trumpet solos, various exercises, and improvisation are all great options for this part of a session, which should mimic the real-life demands of a playing situation.

Finally, warming down after a demanding practice session can be just as important as warming up. Warming down can help to relax your lips, refocus your sound, and will usually make you feel much better the next time you play your trumpet. Playing long tones and low notes are great ways to warm-down.

As you plan your sessions, you can rotate elements in and out of your routine as your time allows. Creating consistent routines will help produce steady progress in your playing and will make you a more dependable musician in the long run.