

Linda Yeo

Guidelines for a Good Practice Session

1. Warm-up. The warm-ups that I gave to you should work just fine to get you going on the horn.
2. Play two or three scales, either ones that I have assigned to you, or other ones if you already know the ones I gave to you very well. Scales are the foundation of music and you will be a better player if you know all of them very well. Work up to two octaves on as many as you can.
3. Play through the first piece I assigned you. (By play, I mean make it from the beginning to the end without stopping, but have your ears open to what you're playing, and take note of where you play well and where you make mistakes.)
4. Go back, and practice the parts where you made mistakes. (By practice, I mean go over the parts, one or two measures at a time, slower than usual, listening to every note.) Your brain needs to understand what you missed and why you missed it. Mistakes are OK but only if you learn from them.

If you miss some particular notes, practice just them until you get them four-five times in a row exactly right. If you get to the third time through and you play a wrong note, start all over again. That's how you get better! Then add some notes to the beginning and end, making it a two-three measure section. This will put the difficult notes back into their place in the music.

Sometimes if it's a very fast passage (a lot of sixteenth notes), it will be important to slow everything down to quarter notes. This is great, because then your brain hears all of the notes you're supposed to be playing, and when you speed it back up, your brain knows what it's supposed to hear.

5. At the end of practicing a piece, make sure that you play it all the way through, so you know how it sounds altogether.

Listen! Listen! Listen!