

# Tips for Effective Practicing

Skyridge Middle School

Like any skill, playing an instrument is something that takes work and dedication. The more you practice *effectively*, the more proficient you'll become, and the more you will enjoy yourself. Following the tips below will help maximize the effectiveness of your practice sessions and will ensure that you're always ready for band class!

- Practice at the same time in the same spot every day. If you develop a routine around practicing, you're more likely to stick to it.
- Keep your practice area quiet and free from distractions.
- Plan your practice time: if you've been having trouble with a particular section of your music, then make sure that you practice that instead of something you already know. Consider this old musician's saying: "You should never sound good in the practice room." In many respects, that's right! Practice the things you don't know well, and occasionally revisit the things you have already learned to make sure you don't forget them.
- Always start with a warm-up. Long tones and scales are a great way to get your music muscles working.
- Have a *focused* practice session. If you have a lot of things to get through, pick only a couple to work on. Your next practice session, you can work on a couple more. You don't have to solve all your trouble spots in a single practice session.
- **Take things slowly at first!** Don't practice your mistakes, or else that's what you'll learn. Instead, play something as slow as you need to in order to play it perfectly. Then, gradually build up speed. Speaking of speed...
- ...use a metronome! A metronome keeps a steady beat so you can make sure that you're practicing at a consistent tempo.
- Strive for perfection, but it's OK to settle for excellence. Always make sure you're making the best sounds you can on your instrument. The more you practice making music, the sooner you'll start making excellence a habit and not an exception to the rule.
- Always end with something fun! If practicing is like dinner, then playing something fun at the end is like dessert. This is your way of rewarding yourself for a session well-done.