



THE PRACTICE TRAP

10 PRACTICE PITFALLS BLOCKING
YOUR RAPID PROGRESS



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Always Starting from the Beginning

Tip: Identify challenging sections. Practice them more than the rest of the piece. Start at the end and gradually add measures on.



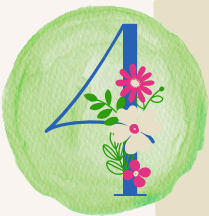
Practicing Without a Clear Goal

Tip: Set specific, achievable objectives for each practice session. Examples: playing each hard part 4 times, finding a better fingering for 5 measures that often trip you up. See tip #3.



Practicing Mindlessly

Tip: Pause often to check if what you are doing is addressing the problem you are trying to solve. If not, find a way to make that section easier: go more slowly, play a shorter excerpt, pause before a sudden dynamic change.



Practicing for too long

If you find your mind wandering, change up what you're doing. The brain learns better when you challenge it. For example: play staccato instead of legato. Start at a different part of the piece or measure. Play the dynamics of the phrase on one note only.



Practicing Too Fast

Tip: Pick a tempo where you can play your chosen section without any mistakes. If you are practicing mistakes you are teaching yourself to get better at making mistakes.



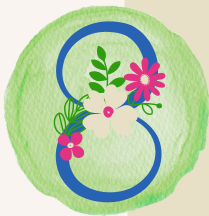
Ignoring Rhythm and Timing

Tip: Be sure you know how the rhythm is supposed to sound. Listen to a recording of the piece to help you. Write in the beats in your music if necessary. Clap or tap the rhythm until you can execute it easily, then try playing the pitches on the keyboard.



Ignoring Fingering

Tip: ALWAYS mark fingerings in your score. Change any fingerings printed in your music if they cause errors or discomfort. Practice each passage with the same fingering every time.



Neglecting Sight Reading

Tip: Dedicate 5-10 minutes of each practice session to sight-reading new material. Choose material that you can play at a moderate tempo with 80-90% accuracy. Your sight reading level might be quite different than your playing level.



Relying on Muscle Memory

Tip: Pay attention to the patterns in your piece. Find the things that repeat. If you know how to identify chords, write them in your music and practice thinking of them chords as you play Play one part such as the bass and sing another.



Inconsistent Practice Schedule

Tip: Harness the power of habit. Set a regular daily practice time to make it easier for you to get started practicing. Getting started is usually the hardest part!



Doing two sessions per day is twice as effective as only one per day. The second session could be very short. You'll get maximum benefit if it is near the end of the day so your brain can process what you learned while you are sleeping.

HI, I'M REBECCA BOGART

I help passionate adult classical pianists realize their musical dreams through artistic inspiration, actionable, specific feedback and transformative practice strategies.

I've helped thousands of students feel happier and more confident about their playing.

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