

STRUCTURING YOUR PRACTICE & DAILY CHECK UP

DR. SHELLEY MARTINSON

Practicing the fundamentals develop your ability learn (and enjoy!) pieces more quickly. The following is example of daily warm up/check up (fundamental) exercises and how to structure your practice –know that your personal approach will and should differ.

Stretching: 5 minutes

Observe Posture: Continuously throughout your practice

- Do you feel balanced and grounded? Are you leaning forward as you play?
- Notice and let any tension pass.
- Do you feel the “yawn” position (throat open, soft palate raised, tongue relaxed down)

Breathing: 5 minutes

1. Exhalation Circles

- Completely empty lungs. Play sustained tone until completely out of air.
- Inhale freely through dropped jaw. Allow the breath to fill from the bottom up like a bellows.
- Repeat immediately two additional times.

2. Dinosaur Breathe & Hiss

- Put knuckle of thumb in mouth, take a full, quick breath.
- Listen to the pitch of the breath. Strive to create the lowest pitch possible.

3x. 4 counts—Sustained

- Inhale on a dinosaur breath for four counts
- Hiss out on “ss” for four counts.
- Repeat two additional times.

3x. 2/8 counts—Pulses

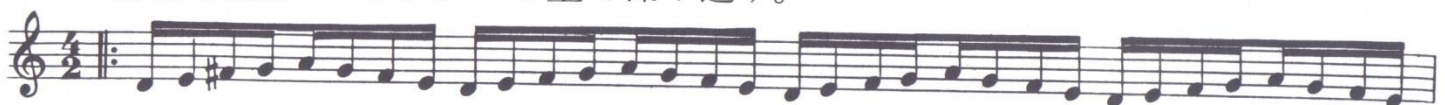
- Inhale on a dinosaur breath for two counts.
- Pulse out in quarter notes on “ss” for eight counts.
- Repeat two additional times

1. Sing & Play: 5-10 minutes

Excerpt from Taffanel & Gaubert, *Exercices Journaliers*, No. 1

Play slowly, alternating between singing a stationary pitch and singing in unison. Repeat in all keys.

Reprise à l'octave 一オクターヴ上で繰り返す。



Sing low pitch.
Don't move voice.

Normal

Sing in unison.

Normal

Sing low pitch.
Don't move voice.

Normal

Normal

Normal

2. Long Tones: 10-20 minutes minimum

Excerpt from Moyse, *De La Sonorite*

- Practice with tuner up and down range chromatically (Repeat below exercise going up). Direct air downward to counteract going sharp and upward to keep from going flat. Imagine the best flute sound before playing.
- Play twice. FF (molto vibrato) dim. To pp (NV) and reverse.

1.  *pp (NV)* 2.  *FF*



etc.



3. Scales & Technical Exercises: 10-20 minutes minimum with articulations

Practice with the metronome keeping fingers close to keys. Begin on a different number each day.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Slur all notes | 5. Tongue two, slur two | 9. Tongue (2/note) on "la" |
| 2. Slur in groups of four | 6. Slur three, tongue one | 10. Tongue (1/note) on "la" |
| 3. Slur in groups of two | 7. Tongue one, slur three | 11. Double tongue (du gu) |
| 4. Slur two, tongue two | 8. Offset slur | 12. Backwards double tongue |

4. Air Pulses: 5 minutes

Excerpt from Moyse, *Etudes et Exercices Techniques*, No. 5

Practice with one pulse ("hah!") per note –everything slurred. (As this improves, go to two & three.)

5 

5. Octave Slurs: 5 minutes

- Begin on a B above the staff. Slur to the octave below with making minimal changes (only air direction) – keep air speed fast in lower octave note
- Go up chromatically (to C, C#, D, etc.)

6. Harmonics: 5 minutes

From Robert Dick, *Tone Development Through Extended Technique*

- Begin on an A or B in the staff. Crescendo (fast!) air to slur from bottom (fundamental) note to others
- Keep corners of lips neutral – watch yourself in a mirror



The image shows a musical score for a harmonics exercise, consisting of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a blue slur over a series of notes, with the instruction "Sim." above it. The second staff has the instruction "lower Bb" above it. The third staff has the instruction "lift D# key" above it. The fourth and fifth staves continue the exercise with various notes and slurs. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb).

7. Etudes: 10-20 minutes

Divide into chunks and use technical practice techniques. For example, If etude is 8 lines, focus on learning 1-2 lines per day. Begin by reviewing lines practiced the previous day. Start slowly on the new section, practicing with different rhythms and articulations.

8. Pieces: 15-25 minutes

What is your goal for the week and for the practice session? Divide into sections accordingly. Always always listen as you practice and use practice techniques. Use the metronome and tuner as tools. Practice makes permanent.

9. Listening: 10-20 minutes

Make listening to flutists you admire a daily practice. Ask Dr. Martinson for flutists to listen to if you're not sure.

10. Sight Reading: 5 minutes

Make daily sight reading a habit. Begin with short, scalar and rhythmically simple passages (one – three measures) and gradually increase difficulty and length if error free.

YOUR PRACTICE CHECKLIST: *Tailor for Yourself!*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
DAILY CHECK UP:							
<i>Long tones</i>							
<i>Harmonics</i>							
<i>Sing & Play</i>							
<i>Other Ex.</i>							
<i>Air Pulses Ex.</i>							
<i>Scales</i>							
<i>Etudes</i>							
SOLOS							
ENSEMBLE REPERTOIRE							
SIGHT READING							
LISTENING							
PRACTICE LENGTH							