

Practice Methods for Brass Musicians

- Listen to recordings of the piece you are studying.
- Sing the piece you are studying.
- Use a tuner AND play in tune. Look at the tuner as you play and make adjustments.
- Play every note with a world-class sound.
- Play everything like a long tone exercise: slow, connected, lyrical.
- Slur everything.
- Tongue everything.
- Buzz a passage or problem interval.
- Start a practice session at the end of a piece and work backwards.
- Start slow. Gradually increase the tempo of your piece after you center every note at the previous tempo.
- Maintain a balanced practice routine that includes all the skills necessary to play your instrument. Do not neglect certain skills.
- Keep your chops fresh by taking frequent breaks.
- During your breaks, try practicing mentally by audiating your music and fingering along or by listening to music you are studying.
- Mark your breaths and practice following them when playing through your music.
- Spend most of your time on the passages or skills you are behind on.
- Play something that is fun everyday.
- Incorporate fermatas into phrases to check intonation and sound quality on certain notes.
- If you cannot sit down and hear the music in your mind while looking at the page, spend more time listening to recordings of the work or singing it out loud.
- Listen to something often that features your instrument and inspires you.
- Understanding and comprehending music is more fundamental to music-making than simply learning technique on your instrument. Study music theory as much

as you study your instrument: listen to new works, watch music theory videos, have a good understanding of how scales and arpeggios work, etc.

- Iron out tricky fingerings by swinging or over-dotting the rhythm.
- Iron out tricky intervals by playing them on your tuner app or a piano, singing them, and connecting the two notes lyrically on your horn.
- Spend half of your practice time on fundamental skills and technique. This will prepare you to play a broader spectrum of music and will also allow you to learn music faster.
- Spend a little bit of time each day sight reading a short etude or piece. Try singing or audiating it.