

# Tips For Practicing Your Instrument

## What To Practice

- Warm up very carefully, using long tones on all the notes you know. Right from the beginning, try to play a 'nice sound' for up to 20 seconds. Blow air through the instrument first, and move all keys, valves and slides. Moisten reeds properly.
- Remember: POSTURE, POSITION, EMBOUCHURE, BREATHING
- Class assignments
  - before playing the exercise, look for notes you don't know the fingering for and look them up on the fingering chart
  - work on the assigned exercises / weekly evaluation first (after your warm-up)
- count the rhythms carefully, clapping and counting out loud if it helps
- look for other musical signs that will affect how you play
- play other pages in the book that you have already learned, especially the songs that you like. Get other music you like.
- complete each session by making sure your instrument is left clean and in good working condition.

## How To Practice

- Always practice with a metronome
- Select a time of day that will be as free as possible from interruptions and try to use this time or one similar every day of the week.
- Choose a place where there will be freedom from distractions. Use a music stand!
- Do not practice in front of the T.V. set while the family is watching or in the kitchen while someone is preparing a meal.
- Be self-critical. **Isolate troublesome passages** or exercises and work on them using the following suggestions:
  - reduce the speed until the difficulty is overcome
  - play the section until you can play the passage 3 times in a row perfectly, then gradually increase the speed.
  - repeat over and over at tempo, but only if the repetition is correct!!
  - never try to develop **speed** at the expense of accuracy. **Practice Slowly! Be Accurate!**
- Short and frequent sessions are better than one or two long home practice sessions!
- Every individual does not have to practice the same amount of time. Work for specific results - not time on the clock.