



Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School

Instrumental Music Department - Band

2057 Washington Avenue

Lewisburg, PA 17837

Phone: (570) 523-3220 x 3059 (Band Office)

email: Orris_D@dragon.k12.pa.us

Website: www.dragon.k12.pa.us/ms/music/index.htm

Dale A. Orris

Instrumental Music Teacher & Director of Bands

HOME PRACTICING ROUTINE:

- ♪ **Be prepared.** Have everything you need, before you start practicing. -- Your music, a **red** pencil, valve oil, cork grease, extra reeds, matching drum sticks, water bottle for trombone slide, etc.
- ♪ **Warm-up**
 - * Brasses & Woodwinds - play long tones and scales.
 - * Percussion - play rudiments.
- ♪ **Have a plan.** Start by working on the difficult sections of music and finish by reviewing the easy sections.
- ♪ **Always strive to improve.**
 - * Do you know all the notes and how to play them (fingering/sticking)?
 - * Can you play & count all the rhythms?
 - * Do you need to write in the counting for any rhythms that are difficult?
 - * Are you playing with a good tone and at the right volume?
- ♪ **Finishing your practice session:**
 - * Review. Play (again) the sections of music that gave you trouble.
 - * Mark sections that still need more practice. Use a star or a check mark.
 - * Play a piece or part of a piece of music, just for fun.
- ♪ **Take care of everything so you'll be ready to practice, next time.**
 - * Put all your music & lesson book(s) into a folder for safe keeping.
 - * Woodwinds:
 - Remove your reed from your mouthpiece and put it into a reed holder.
 - Clean the inside of your instrument after every practice session.
 - Put cork grease on corks that feel dry.
 - * Brasses
 - Oil valves at least once each week.
 - Clean & lubricate trombone hand slide at least once each month.
 - Wash your mouthpiece at least once a month.

*** See next page for lots of PRACTICING TIPS ***

PRACTICING TIPS:

* **When you take your instrument at home, put your instrument together and leave it set up in the room where you practice until you need to pack it up for school.** If your music is out and on a music stand and the instrument is already out, then you can do your practicing without taking the time to assemble the horn all the time. Students are expected to practice at least six days between each lesson and at least 20 minutes each day of practice. It's much better to practice many short periods of time than to practice once or twice for a long period of time! And remember, it's better to practice 5 or 10 minutes than no minutes!!!!

* **Set aside a regular time, each day, for practicing.** Just like there is a certain time for eating, watching your favorite TV program, or soccer practice, there should be a certain time just for your home practice. For example, if you do your homework as soon as you get home from school or right after supper, set aside 20 minutes (or more, if you like) for practice during that time also. Don't have any homework? You could practice longer if you wanted to!!!!

* **It's best to practice the difficult parts of your assignment first.** Frequently students will only play through easier music or just "mess around" on their instrument when they practice. While this may be fun, it's not very productive and it's not helping you improve. Ask yourself, "What's the hardest part of this lesson?" It's usually the part that doesn't sound as good. That's the part that needs the most practice. The fun really starts when you can play everything!!!!!!

* **Practice the hard sections in your music four times more than the easy ones.** Remember, you may not "master" the music in one, two, or even three practice sessions. Learning to play music takes time and repetition.

* **Practice your music very slowly at first.** After you have it learned, speed up, a little at a time, until you can play it at the correct speed.

* **Are there sections of the music that are difficult for you?** Learn the difficult sections one or two measures at a time. After you've practiced the measures, try playing the whole section. Still not perfect? Work on the same thing tomorrow.

* **Once you've learned a difficult section, play through it a couple of times** and then play through it a couple of times again, the next day that you practice (tomorrow, right?). Remember - **Repetition helps you retain (remember).**

* **Don't always start at the beginning.** Sometimes start at the end of the music. Try practicing the last 4 measures, then the last 8, then last 16, etc. In the lesson book, start with the last exercise of the assignment.

* **Use your red pencil often.** Examples: Mark problem spots with a star or a check mark. Circle key signatures. Write in sharps, flats, &/or naturals. Write in rhythm counting. Mark the beats. Write in the fingerings.

* **Play the music without making a sound** (finger the notes with the correct rhythm, play the rhythm on your leg, etc.).

*** See next page for REHEARSAL TIPS ***

**** REHEARSAL TIPS :**

* **Always bring a red pencil to rehearsal** (never use a pen). Don't assume that you can remember everything.

* **Mark your music.** Use your red pencil often. Make your marks **bold** NOT light.

- Circle dynamics
- Circle key changes
- Put a slash mark above each beat of difficult rhythms
- Write the counting below each note/beat of difficult rhythms
- During long rests, mark where other instruments enter or where they have the melody. This will help you with your counting.
- Mark repeats, *Da Capo* (D.C.), *Del Segno* (D.S.), and the *Fine*.

* **Breathe in tempo before every entrance.**

* **Look ahead while playing.** Look ahead for dynamic marks, repeats, first & second endings, etc.

* **Count your rests very carefully.**

* **Watch the conductor!** Look at the conductor before you enter, and especially when a tempo or style change is approaching.

* **Listen, Listen, Listen.**

- Listen while others are playing. Blend with others. Match the style (accented, legato, etc.) of others.
- Listen for the instruments that are playing the melody and be careful not to cover them up.
- When another section is rehearsing, don't just sit there. Listen carefully - the director may have some things to say that apply to your music as well.

* **The second and third parts are as important as the first part.** Every part is essential. The musicians playing the second and third parts often need to play a bit louder for good balance and blend of sound.

** (extracted from "Thoughts from the Middle of the First Violin Section" by Greg Sullivan, Pages 26 - 32 of Teaching Music, Vol. 10, Number 1 / August 2002, an MENC publication)