

# PRACTICE TOOLS

## ABC

Start with the first 3 notes of a passage and join in a note after each correct repetition. Ex: When ABC notes are correct, add the next note: making it ABCD. When that sounds good, add the next: ABCDE, etc..

## XYZ

Start with the last 3 notes of a passage... XYZ When they are correct, add the one before X.. making WXYZ, etc..

## REPETITIONS

Do repetitions to feel at ease.. aka making it feel easier each time. Listen for the right notes, rhythms, good sound quality.

## AS FIFTHS (2 FINGERS ON 2 STRINGS)

Listen for the pure quality of the fifths. Take a practice spot and put that finger on both strings. This will ensure that your left hand is in the perfect position for accurate intonation and efficient fingering.

## RHYTHMS

Sing the big beats while playing the passage. Sing the subdivisions and play the passage. Switch: sing the passage with the metronome doing the beats.

## ACCENTS WITH BOW

Accent the 1st beat of each passage, when this is clean and sounds good, accent the next note (example: accent the second sixteenth note if in a passage of all sixteenth notes). Next, accent the third sixteenth note of each group, etc.

# ACCENTS WITH FINGERS

Drop finger extra hard into the string. This will strengthen the finger and the connection in between the notes. Example: lift, lift drop. Example in a piece: if playing Song of the Wind: open A, 1st finger lift back at base knuckle and then drop, 2nd finger lift back and drop, etc..

# DOTTED PATTERNS

Play the pur-ple rhythm pattern as well as cook-ieeee, celery.. grouping the notes together in different ways which will add clarity to the passage.

# PLAY THE RESTS

Play notes where the rests are so you can feel the full value of the rest. After doing this, add the rest back in and then repeat until it's consistent.

# PLAY THE LITTLE NOTES IN THE DOT OR THE TIE

Play the notes in the slurs so that you hold the slurs or the ties long enough. Also play the subdivisions in the dotted rhythms.

# MENTAL REHEARSAL

Just as an olympic skier mentally traces the course in their mind before they compete in the olympics, we should also mentally trace the piece in our mind as a part of our practice. Picture the notes on the page, picture the sound of the notes, picture what it looks like for you to be playing on your instrument, picture the bow and you can even picture the left hand.

**MEMORY** Try and play the passage memorized without looking at music or a recording.

**AURAL** Sing the piece in your mind. Sing the passages outloud. Play short phrases from memory. Listen to many different recordings and live performances.

**VISUAL** Study the music without your violin. Watch the notes as you listen to a recording. Play phrases while mentally picturing the notes in your mind.

**TACTILE** Practice phrases with your eyes shut, your head in a different position on your violin. A major part of playing is how the instrument feels and it's very easy to forget the first note because we can't remember how it feels in our mind.

**INTELLECTUAL** Understand sequences, phrases. Find differences in patterns- whether using a different finger, shift, or bow pattern. Describe the piece outloud in order to understand it.

**LISTENING** Confused on how it sounds? Listen to recordings from 5 different artists.

**YO-YO MA'S 4 STEPS** Practice feel daunting and have no idea where to start on this big new piece? Maybe you even did your practice spots and it still feels like a huge project. Start with how the famous cellist Yo Yo Ma practices: 1) listening 2) sing the piece all the way through (can also sing with a recording 3) find the spots that look the most difficult and mark them in your music 4) be an engineer. Build the piece. Pick an easy starting spot + a small goal. Did you meet your goal at the end of the practice session?

**S - L - O - W** Play it at a speed where it is IMPOSSIBLE to make any mistakes. Only increase the speed when you can play that section through without any mistakes.

**METRONOME** Use the metronome on a slow speed, about 50 BPM and try and clap the rhythm with the metronome saying blue jello words, using the bow in the air and singing the bow pattern, and then try it slowly on the violin.

## RECORD & WATCH

Record your practice spot and listen back.

Use the 80/20 rule. 80% of your practice should be on the spots you can't play. 20% of your practice should be the 'easy' parts.

## ONE HAND AT A TIME

Try the left hand and tap the fingers

on the side of the violin (the fingers that you will play in the piece). Try just the bow.. can you play the passage on open strings while imagining the left hand fingers? Try pizzicato to isolate the left hand. Try doing bow exercises and play with upside-down bow to ease.

## CHANGE HOW YOU PLAY IT

If something isn't

working, try and analyze what it is and do it differently. If it doesn't work, then don't do it.