

DIMITRI MURRATH



Practice Strategies



VIOLIN

ABOUT THE COURSE

Join renowned violist Dimitri Murrath in his course “Practice Strategies,” where he explores a range of effective techniques to optimize your practice sessions and enhance your musical progress. The course covers deliberate practice, drawing on research to highlight the most efficient methods, and delves into various practice approaches, including block, layered, and random practice. Murrath also emphasizes the importance of taking breaks, provides guidance on implementing these strategies, and introduces mental practice as a powerful tool for reinforcing learning and preparing for performances.



If you have any corrections, comments, or critiques relating to this workbook, please send them to marek@tonebase.co. We strive to deliver the highest quality enrichment experience. Thank you!

Practice Strategies

There are four levels of practice:

1. Play mindlessly with repetition

- You may get a bit better but won't see lasting improvement.

2. Identifying problems and repeating them

- You may not be able to sort them or determine the root cause of the problem.

3. Mental representations

- You start to think about how to do a task.
- Mental practice is used.

4. Deliberate practice

- You have a purpose and feedback.
- There may be resistance and criticism.
- A lesson with an instructor is a form of deliberate practice.
- A practice journal can be a part of deliberate practice.



There has been a lot of research about the neuroscience of how we learn in recent years:

- **Block practice** is when we devote a chunk of time to a specific task. Over time, you improve, and this gives the illusion of mastery.
- **Layered practice** says that the more we retrieve information, the brain decides it is a vital memory to solidify.
 - This type of practice uses smaller chunks of practice repeated throughout the day.
 - This is more efficient for retaining what was practiced in past sessions.

- **Random practice** is a higher level of practice strategy.
 - Switch up the order of operations in your practice sessions to randomize the skillsets being practiced.

Breaks allow you to process information.

- The quality of a break is important.
 - Avoid looking at your phones or doing other tasks.
 - Drink water, get fresh air, move your body, or do some breathing work.
- **Sleep** is essential for processing new information
 - Research has found that strengthening of newly acquired skills happens in the seventh and eighth hour of sleep.

Keep a **practice diary** to help implement new skills

- When a skill starts to feel easier, it is time to add something new.

A mix of **mental** and **physical practice** is ideal

- Mental practice includes score study, imagining the sound, determining physical gesture and movement.

Learning a new piece requires **larger chunks of time**

- Make a list of difficult sections of the piece to practice randomly.
- By doing random practice repeatedly, you train yourself to perform better under pressure.

Focusing on one thing for a **short time** is more effective than spending a significant amount of time on one thing or being distracted thinking about several aspects simultaneously.

When practicing a difficult piece, start with **daily work**, then as it gets easier, space out the session to every other day, once a week, and monitor how often you need to practice as it becomes more accessible to you.

- Practicing helps us better understand ourselves and our instrument and prepares us to perform under pressure.
- Efficient and deliberate practice also helps us spend less time in the practice room and allows us more time to do the other things we enjoy.