

Top Ten Practice Strategies

1. Rest. Sleep. Exercise. Eat well.
2. Follow the Nike motto “Just do it!” Routines are powerful. Daily doses are better than binges. Set the alarm. Get up. Get started.
3. Have goals – Long term and short term. Follow your passions.
4. Plan your work. Schedule your practice like an appointment.
5. “Flexible, but not limp” is the motto of the diplomatic corps. It applies to practicing also. Using intelligence helps.
6. Divide your practice between:
 - building skills
 - interpreting music
 - practicing performing
7. Always hear first, feel next, and only then play. Singing is good. Just like tennis where you must keep your eye on the ball, keep your ear on the sounds you are producing – consistency develops as a result.
8. Repetition and silence are fundamental practice tools. Visualize the sounds and physical feelings during the silence. Find the size unit you can perceive as a whole unit and repeat it.
9. Do as successful CEO’s do, tackle your largest challenges early in the day. It frees up a lot of energy. Use brackets for difficult passages, practice those the most.
10. Support yourself well as an artist. Find friendly listeners as a regular audience. Performing is not a closet art. Keep a practice journal. Include appreciations!

This post first appeared in the inaugural year of the AVS Studio Blog, November 13, 2012, featuring the viola studios at the Juilliard School. To view more of those posts, please visit : <http://americanviolasociety.org/studio/>



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