



Episode 24: 2021 Practice Tips - Part 1

Welcome to episode 24! This is the first of a two part series (to be continued next week) recapping all the great practice tips our guests shared as a part of their interview since the podcast launched this past summer.

I'm excited to be wrapping up the year with these two episodes and to be able to revisit the great advice we've heard here from our expert guests. It's a great way to go into the new year as well thinking about what we might want to think about in our own practice sessions at home - for ourselves or the young musicians we support.

We always wrap up our conversations on the Time to Practice podcast sharing one final tip for you to take with you and use. Before we hear from our first 10 guests on this week's episode a huge thank you to you for listening and making our first 20+ episodes such a success.

Thank you for listening, for sharing on social media, for recommending in your school and studio newsletters, and for sharing episodes that spoke to you to your friends and colleagues.

This is the best way you can support this project - spread the word and share episodes you love with someone in your life you think would appreciate them. I so appreciate you being here and being a part of this project.

If you want to go back and listen to an episode you missed, or relisten to one you loved you can find links to each of these episodes on SuzukiTriangle.com/TTPEpisode24/

Let's hear our first practice tip from parent, music educator, music school owner, and music teacher coach Rebecca Lane:

Rebecca Lane:

The thing that has worked the best with my own kids. And again, I'm no expert. And I know that you've said this tip before Christine. So I, I apologize for repeating it, but I think it bears repeating that practicing at the same time every day is for my family, the most effective way to make sure that it gets

done and to minimize disgruntled complaining children . So if they expect that it's gonna happen, it's no surprise when I ask them to do it. And you can make that time of day, essentially any time. I mean, the earlier in the day, the better, I think if you can do it in the morning before school or whatever, then that's usually when kids are the freshest for my family, that's not usually possible to do in the morning and with my son he's so of it, and he's doing cello. We always do his practice right before bed. So he's in his pajamas already. He comes into the practice space and we do it. It's really short and hopefully sweet, but he just expects that it's gonna happen. And there's not a lot of complaining because it happens every day at that time. So that would be my tip practice at the same time every day, a whenever possible and be as consistent as you possibly can.

Our next guest is Dr. Shu-Yi Scott- a cellist, Suzuki Teacher Trainer, parent, and innovative teacher especially when it comes to online and tactile learning. She had two great tips to share with us in her episode.

Shu-Yi Scott: Oh, there's so many. Well for young children for very young children, my tip would be parents set the model when the parents wanted the kids to practice and they don't want to comply or they want the phone.

Parents should practice and fail and let the child see the struggle and let the child be the teacher. That's always a great tip for my pre twinkle and book one. May I add another tip? (Christine: Yes, please!) It was for older students. When the students are more independent, I often use a timer to calculate how many times or how many seconds they would actually need to practice a certain tricky spot for five times or 10 times.

And they realize, oh, 's only 27 seconds. You know, 10 times is daunting, but it's only, you know, less than 30 seconds. So I think both are my favorite tips.

Next up is Bryson Tarbet - Bryson is an elementary music teacher, a piano teacher, and hosts a great podcast as well as offering resources to music teachers at ThatMusicTeacher.com

Bryson Tarbet: If I could try to boil everything I've learned down into one tip about practice is.

Well, one do it. (laughs) That's always helpful. But you know, it doesn't matter how long you practice if you're not doing it in a meaningful way. So, you know instead of practicing one hour, practice five hours every day (oops!) or five minutes every day that is. But do it in a really meaningful focused, you know, have a plan and really do it in a way that's going to work for you and for what your goals are.

Our next tip comes from Abigail Peterson who was my co-host on the Beyond the Music Lesson podcast which you can still find on most podcast platforms. Abigail is a violinist, Suzuki teacher, and a Suzuki parent of two young boys. Her tip highlighted some of what she learned after practicing with them through a pandemic.

Abigail Peterson

So I guess I'll take it from the parent perspective and the teacher perspective, my tip overall is to lower the bar, not of the, what you're gonna accomplish, keep your standards high for what you're gonna

accomplish. Cuz if you have a good teacher and you're working hard in the relationship at home, the standards don't need to be low. But I think what this year has taught me is that we all just need grace and that it's okay. If you know, you have a time period where practice is hard and just to not catastrophize it, or, oh my gosh, we haven't practiced while we're on a really bad street. You've missed several days in a row. Don't don't like throw your hands up in the air and give up, but starting small and having a lot of grace for yourself, that's been what I've focused on as a teacher for my students. And then as a parent for my children,

Next we hear from Kimberly Wong. Kimberly is a violinist in the UK who grew up in the Suzuki method and besides being a music educator specializes in helping families practice with their young students with less stress and more positive interactions.

Kimberley Wong:

So I think my one practice tip comes back to something that I'm sure most parents have heard time and time again, but is important. But the reason that specific praise is important is because that's how your child knows what progress looks like. It's actually the roadmap for your child to understand how to improve, because it's really easy to praise and say, that's good, that's great. And maybe it's not easy for some people to praise if you didn't grow up with it. But if you can find the little thing and really tell your child what it is that they have done and what they have improved on or what you would like to see them do again, that's, what's gonna build confidence and confidence, breeds confidence. Specific praise is the way

Diane Worthey shared her tip about practice with us during her episode where we talked about her newly published Children's book *In One Ear and Out the Other: Antonia Brico and Her Amazing Musical Life*.

Diane Worthey:

That's the number one thing is you just have to do it and you have to just set aside time. Hopefully the same time every day to do it. I can't sugar coat that it's just kinda like same with when I was writing my book, I just had to sit down and do it, and it was hard.

But you just, you work on it every day; find a time of day that seems like, this is my violin practice time or my Viola practice time. This is, this is when I do it. And then pat yourself on the back, you know, and say, Hey, I did it. And for me earlier in the day is better than later, because then I can relish in the:

"Oh, I got it done!: Instead of it hanging over my head going, " still need to practice. I still need to do this." So that's one thing. And then this comes from Julie Andrews. "Some people regard discipline as a choice. For me, it's a kind of order that sets me free to fly. "So I like that. I'm thinking of it as it's going to help me just discipline's going to help me fly. The best practice tip is just make it fun while you're doing it.

I loved hearing cellist Maria De Alba's tip about doing the unusual, out of the box thing to help motivation your children and the story she shared about doing so with her own children:

Maria de Alba: I think that when my kids were very small, they were always asking us, me and my husband to take them to play on the streets.

I don't know, they just love it too. But, you know, Mateusz he plays the drums and he had like, a little drum set and the snare plus the big one, plus the symbols plus chair and all the stands. They're really heavy. And then we have three cellos in the family plus four stands plus three chairs.

And for some parents might be crazy. (They might think) Not to do it, or maybe they will be like, "oh, to the next Sunday, today's my free day. I don't want to do it."

And the beginning we were like that. But then we realized what this type of experience (is) giving to our children. It will give them for sure, something positive. In my city where we used to live in Mexico the weather it's about 38 or 40 degrees Celsius, which, which is very hot because . . . you use farenheight right?. That's something like a hundred and 20. Extremely hot. So imagine ourselves taking all the stuff. To play in downtown. Oh my gosh. That was really crazy. I'm so sure that this crazy ideas gave them this passion that they have right now, because they had these opportunities with music.

And I suggest all parents or even teachers to create these environments for the kids. If their kids want to do something with the instrument. That maybe to think two times before saying no. Because we may not notice that, or maybe we are not thinking what is going to be the result . . . it is always going to give a positive result with the music.

And I would suggest that just to enjoy the process, of course, practice daily is very important. To have, you know, your plan of practicing. But I think this, all these opportunities to share music are also really good and kids, they always have great ideas about practicing in different places from the house, or maybe bought into the park and play, or maybe to go downtown and play for people.

And I think just to listen, listen to their case and do it, just do it. Not to be afraid of that and enjoy the moment.

Dr. Molly Gebrian is a violist, who also specializes in Nueroscience and if you missed her episode definitely go back and listen to the whole thing which was packed with practice tips you won't want to miss:

Dr. Molly Gebrian

I think the most important thing with practicing, if you wanna get better, is to focus on your weaknesses . . . and that doesn't feel good! But that's how you get better.

Next we hear from Laura Sinclair a violinist and music educator from Florida who shared so many great ideas about how we can support what student's need in order to practice effectively:

Laura Sinclair: I would say my suggestion for parents and practices would be to put your own mask on first. So make sure that your biological needs are met. Assess yourself, sit for a second. Am I hungry? I

use the word halt, hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. If you have addressed all of those things and then see that all of those needs also met for my child.

And maybe also assess, is there anything missing. Especially with the hungry thing, do I think that they're not hungry or are they actually not hungry? I'm going to throw that in there because sometimes you just need a little something.

And that can like dopamine response and we're more receptive to doing things. I would say, put your mask on first, make sure that the mask is on your child. That seems a very 2020 thing to say. Meet the child that you have in front of you today. Not the one you had yesterday, not the one you had last week, the one that's in front of you and make them a partner in and executing the practice so that way they feel like they're in control. If you've taken away the unpredictability. And because you're there with them, there's less threat to the ego.

And finally we wrap up with great practice advice from violinist, music educator, and advocate Calida Jones. This is another episode to go back and listen to if you missed it the first time and I love her practice tip to wrap things up for us on this week's episode.

Calida Jones:

I would say review review, review, review, review review is such a gift. And I, I credit review to why I sight read so well. You know, in my reviewing, I learn a lot of different techniques as a child and, and those pieces that I was reviewing for so many years, I can still play them the same way that I did as a kid . . . but better I should add <laughs> . I should preface that but review is so important because it layers, it builds upon the skills. And then the process of review will intersect with life as you become an engineer, or if they become a lawyer, if they become a judge, if they become an HVAC worker, an entrepreneur, they're gonna have to have those processes in place. And that starts at review. Believe it or not. So if I couldn't encourage anything else, it would be to review. It's my favorite thing to do.

I'm looking forward to being back next week with more practice tips from our inspiring guests from 2021. If you found these tips helpful or inspiring I invite you to share it on social media or with a friend. I'd love to have the words of these wonderful musicians shared with as many musicians and parents of musicians as we can. Have a great week everyone!

