

Genius is 1% talent and 99% hard work. Albert Einstein

Laura's Top 10 Practice Tips for Pianists

1. Piano should be in a place where you can practice comfortably without interruptions. Keep clutter away from the piano, have books nearby and organized. Piano should be tuned at least once a year. **(for a tuning, call Eric Mau 206-772-1045)**
2. Practice at the same time of day, if possible. Make practice a daily habit! For me, early morning works great! For you, right after school may be an ideal time.
3. Sit at the bench and take a few slow breaths before launching into practice. Look at the practice page to see what you are supposed to be practicing, work methodically through your weekly assignments!
4. Start with scales, technique, finger exercise, sight-reading or an assigned warm-up.
5. Work on new material first. This requires the most brain power and concentration. Don't try to do all of your new material at once, break it into bite sized pieces during the course of the week. This may require tapping out rhythm, working hands alone, and putting hands together very slowly.
6. Listen for sticky places in your music, devote extra time to *wood-shedding* problem areas. Don't just speed through those mistakes while thinking problems are going to fix themselves. Roll up your sleeves and get to work!
7. The middle of your practice should be devoted to pieces that are underway, but still need some work. Strive to include as much detail as possible: expression, articulation, tempo, dynamics, tone, mood. Check for correct fingerings!
8. Make friends with the **metronome**. Use it to work on rhythms, check for even tempo, or to help you gradually speed up your piece.
9. The end of your practice is your reward for working hard, take out your *Backpocket List*, and enjoy playing through your polished pieces! (The *Backpocket List* is a list of songs that have been completed and polished to keep up and be able to play at a moment's notice.)
10. If you only have 10 minutes.....learn a few measures of new music and play a piece from your *Backpocket List* to stay in shape!

Ages 9 and older: Practice at least 5 days per week for 30 minutes minimum, 45 minutes is better, and an hour a day is best! Students should refer to their practice binder/assignment page to see exactly what they are to be practicing.

Young beginners (ages 5-8): Practice at least 5 days every week. The amount of time isn't as important as getting into the habit of daily practice. Fifteen to twenty minutes daily may be enough, depending on the level.