

Good morning, string parents,

August 10, 2023

Let's talk about practice! Practice is essential to mastering an instrument, and effective practicing is a skill which itself takes some, **ahem** ... practice.

How can I, the parent, help?

You can have a tremendous influence on your child's musical development right now, by helping them establish a practice routine. Designating a consistent time and place for practicing will help it to become a habit.

The ideal practice environment is somewhere quiet, where students can focus without distraction and where they won't bother the rest of your family, either. Discuss with your child where and when this can be. Then, have a conversation with the family so everyone knows to keep distractions away.

You may be wondering ... how long should one practice? How often? Please visit <https://www.string-samurai.com/practice-tips> to learn these answers!

This week's practice challenge

This week, we're focusing on what may be the hardest part of a practice session ... the choice to start! There were so many times growing up when my instrument was sitting right there, but it seemed like so much work to take it out of the case and set it up. Yet whenever I began a practice session, it was fun! I'd get so caught up that time would pass in the blink of an eye. Thus, the first habit kids must develop is the willpower to proactively initiate practice.

On Monday, kids received a Superstar Practice Chart. It measures **how many days you initiate a practice session**. That practice session can last an hour or it may last 5 minutes, but so long as you've *started* a practice session, mark it down on the chart! Next Monday, we'll see how everyone did and graph the results on our bulletin board. The goal is 5 days of practice for every student. Students who practice 6 days will get a "Great" and students who practice all 7 days will get an "Outstanding"!



*"One good thing about music,
when it hits, you feel no pain."
-Bob Marley*

What should I be practicing? (1st-year students)

The primary objective for the first weeks of home practice is to build finger strength – muscle and callus. Once developed, we'll be able to produce a full sound and play for long durations. **Until we build this strength**, students need to practice **every day for at least 5 minutes**. That is the minimum it takes – you may do more if your fingers can handle it. When your fingertips hurt, that's your body's way of telling you to take a break. If you practice for a little bit every day, it'll only take a week or two for your fingers to acclimate to orchestra.

A few students do not have instruments yet, or do not have an instrument for home practice. But there's still a way for you to complete this challenge! **Watching a video lesson also counts** as a "practice session". This week's homework is to finish the remaining video lessons at <https://www.string-samurai.com/video-lessons>. Last week, students watched *The Basics* and learned how to earn a White Belt. This week, students are learning about *The Bow*.

What should I be practicing? (2nd-year students)

Practice for your next belt! We'll continue from where you left off last year. Our class goal is for everyone to complete red or green belt this quarter, but you can set your individual goal to be as far as you'd like!

Best regards,

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[Mr. Lambert's class website](#)