

Practice Tips A to Z

Dr. Michael Dean
Associate Professor of Clarinet & Saxophone
Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
mdean@semo.edu or palmtree1999@yahoo.com
clarinetmike.com * 573/651-2535

- A. Always ARTC (Approach, Relaxation, Tone, Counting – “Artsy!”).
- B. Breaks. Practice in several short sessions (30-45 minutes) with breaks.
- C. Counting-Aloud Technique. See Lesson 5 of Leon Russianoff’s Clarinet Method, Book I.
- D. Double Articulation. Put two articulations of equal duration on each note of a passage.
- E. Enjoy your metronome, but don’t get addicted.
- F. Fingers Ahead. See Daniel Bonade’s short book, The Clarinetist’s Compendium.
- G. Go Slow at first (with ARTC), then Go Faster. Go SLOW!
- H. Hands! “If you can’t clap it, you can’t play it.”
- I. Intensity. Learn to stay focused. (“Relax in your body./Concentrate in your mind.”)
- J. Judge your playing soberly. Know what is “really going on” in your practicing.
- K. Kinko’s. Make study scores of piano part and old versions of your part.
- L. Look for patterns in the music. Find and mark scales, chords, etc. on your music.
- M. Make MUSIC!
- N. No distractions or interruptions while practicing.
- O. Organize your practice. Follow a good practice routine.
- P. Pay Attention to Pitch and Tuning. Get a tuner.
- Q. Quit if it hurts or you get overly upset.
- R. Recordings. Listen to CD’s, etc. for insights, but not too much (don’t copy!).
- S. Sit and Stand during practice.
- T. Tape record yourself and listen to it. Be aware of how you actually sound (and look).
- U. Understand the words, symbols, etc. on the music. Look them up in a music dictionary.
- V. Variety. Spice up practicing by changing the routine (add jazz, etc.)
- W. Work on hard parts first. Break the music into sections.
- X. Examine the larger form. Notice what phrases, sections, etc. repeat.
- Y. Yodel or SING the music.
- Z. Zero in on Rhythm (pattern & pulse). “Rhythm First, Notes Second”