

Suggested Practice Guidelines for Percussion

1. Play music that you find fun. Take out some of your favorite pieces and play through them.
2. Set your metronome to 120. Play 50 strokes with each stick, then 50 strokes with alternating sticking. Make sure that the stick height is consistent for each stroke. Then play the “regular” warm up at least four times.
3. Mallet work. Choose one scale for each week. Make sure that you are alternating sticking as you go up and down the scale. Look for a consistent mallet height and remember to “pull” the tone out of the bar. Work for smoothness of technique and consistency of tone. Practice scales slowly. Once you can play the scale at a slow tempo, practice the 1; 1,2,1; 1,2,3,2,1, exercise. Again, go as slowly as necessary to be accurate before trying to play faster.
4. Assigned music. All students should have assigned music from their sectional group as well as the ensemble. Take the time to make sure everything is played correctly and practice in small chunks. Work out the difficult technical passages slowly. Then gradually speed up the passage to get to the tempo you need. Always use your metronome, whether it’s Roy Burns, Podemski, or any music you are playing for fun or for band.
5. Try to play consistently. Taking a few days off can really stop your momentum. Everyday playing is much more beneficial for tone development and technical prowess.