

## II Effective practice techniques

There are a few golden rules to achieve effective practice which might seem terribly obvious but are proven; the first being to try and avoid the natural impulse to instantly repeat a difficult passage that you have just played incorrectly. If you want to eliminate these 'breakdowns' then a calm, more analytical approach saves time and frustration in the long run.

Every time you play, you promote development of a 'muscle memory' so you need to ensure it is a good one ! If you have trouble with a more difficult passage, stop, isolate, and try to work out exactly what went wrong. The most most common cause in my experience, is poor coordination between the tempo (created by the tongue) and getting the actual notes (fingers/slide).

With us all living in closer proximity at the moment you might be limited to times you can actually play your instrument within in your residence. Don't despair; some of your best practice investment can be achieved by sitting down with a 'cuppa' and simply tonguing and miming the fingers/slide arm. Choose a short, awkward passage and literally keep repeating it (try 50 times) very slowly. When you do get back onto the instrument you will have done all the hard preparation without tiring your 'chops' or annoying the neighbours !

It is all too easy to feel that practicing for long periods will automatically result in progress, however, try to plan shorter more intense practice sessions with plenty of physical and mental rest in between to achieve more effective and lasting progress.

Finally, every time we approach our instrument we should be able to rely on 'muscle memory' along with the coordination of basic skills but above all focus on Positive Mental Attitude. Don't forget how powerful our mind is to precisely deliver the desires of our imagination.

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