

FAQs

Q: I already practice every day, so how will this practice challenge stretch me?

A: You could aim to 'fix' something about your playing, perhaps something you've been putting off! Aim to monitor the growth of something about your own musicality or technique that you admire in another musician. If you lose practice time in lapsed concentration, look at restructuring your practice into smaller chunks.

Q: How will I keep a record of my practice?

A: You can have your own notebook or practice log, a journal specifically for music practice (paper or digital), a practice app such as Andante or you could record voice memos. You can create mood boards, too! Personally, I'll be opting for pen and paper with the addition of voice memos when time is of the essence.

Q: How will the prizes be awarded?

A: Ellie will be sending out a review form after 2 weeks, 4 weeks and at the end of the challenge. The information you supply will show Ellie your commitment to, and how you've tackled, the practice challenge. If forms aren't your thing or you have different access requirements, you can also send me an email and I'll send the questions directly, or a tutor or accountability buddy can submit the information on your behalf, effectively nominating you for a prize.

Q: I can't practice every day, can I still take up the challenge?

A: There are plenty of legitimate reasons why you may not be able to practise daily, so feel free to restructure the sessions in a way you can commit to, for example fitting two or three sessions in on days where you can focus. Try to plan these out a week in advance.

Q: If I miss a day, can I make it up?

A: Yes! Ask yourself first, why am I missing the session? You'll know if it's a good reason! Could you possibly do a shorter session instead?

Q: I'm only a beginner, this all sounds a bit intense, am I in the right challenge?

A: Yes, you are in the right challenge! This is simply about setting goals and trying to push a little harder than you otherwise would. It can be fun and give you a buzz from the improvement and satisfaction of meeting your goals.

Q: What results can I expect to see?

A: You can look forward to making noticeable changes and progress, especially if you combine the daily practice with goal setting and journaling. You will discover and review how much progress you have made in two weeks; it may feel very small but it really multiplies over the weeks if you stick with it.

Q: You mentioned mini outcomes and personal bests on the first PDF, when will we learn more about these and other practice methods?

A: I will be sending some practice methods and guidance out to your email addresses over the coming days and weeks.

Q: Is there such a thing as a bad practice?

A: Yes and no. If you are regularly reinforcing bad technique or practising with no concentration and not striving for improvement, I would call that bad practice. It's normal to feel frustrated, sore and defeated sometimes. In fact, I swear by this being a vital part of the process... you see steady improvement and then suddenly you have a practice where it feels like you have taken a step backwards. This will happen several times when you are making technical leaps and challenging yourself with more difficult repertoire. I would say, if you feel like this more often than not, you need to seek some tutor help or make some changes yourself. Look for smaller improvements and celebrate them. Try not to feel anxious over your practice, and be proud that you made it to the harp that day! It's ok to amend your goals as you go along; we have to adapt sometimes.

Q: Will there be an opportunity for feedback?

A: Ellie will give some brief feedback to you, if you ask for it at the end of the challenge. Email over your practice reviews after 2 weeks, 4 weeks and the end of the challenge. If you want more feedback, Ellie has some available lesson slots.

Q: Will we have to review or appraise our practice?

A: Yes, there is a simple one page review with 6 questions that I would ask you (or your parent, teacher or friend) to complete after two, four and six weeks. You don't have to share everything; just a small indication of your process.

Q: Do I have to tell my teacher?

A: No, but they will probably be happy to know you're doing a practice push and if they can support you by agreeing the goals in advance and being there to help you to achieve them, you will be more likely to succeed! Also, your teacher can send me an email to nominate you for a prize!

Q: How do I get started?

A: Fill in the Practice Challenge Overview, ask a parent, friend or teacher to be your 'accountability buddy' (not essential but helpful) and get practising!

Enjoy the challenge!