

REMEMBER

Much of what we do at the lesson is learning how to be our own teacher at home by thoughtful listening, repetition and discovery.

Just playing something over and over doesn't guarantee success. It just makes you tired and wastes time. Make sure your effort pays off.

Practice is repetition with a purpose. Decide first what you intend and then play. The goal is to play accurately with fewer repetitions.

Use a pencil to mark important fingering, rhythms and accidentals so you can avoid making the same mistakes over and over.



ALCON PIANO STUDIO

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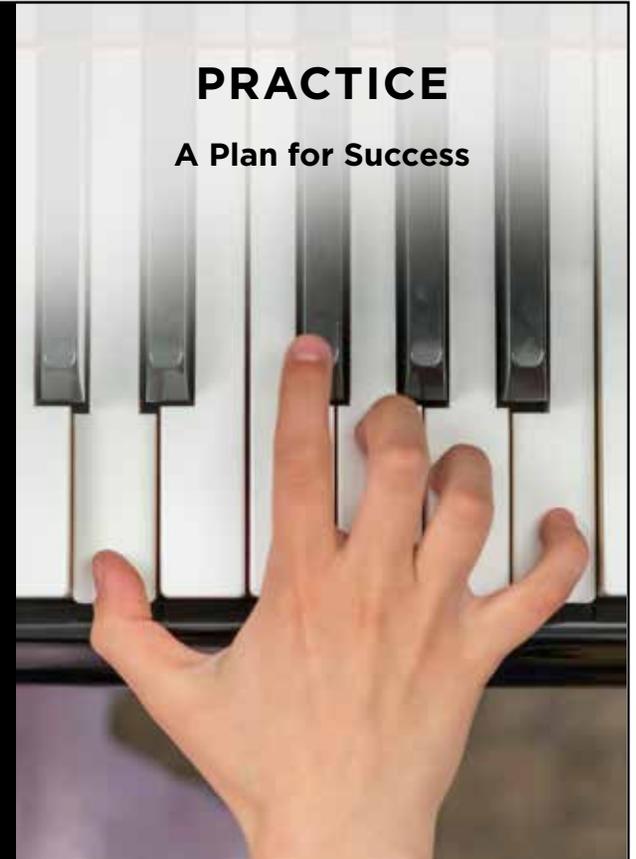
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PRACTICE

A Plan for Success



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MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS

WHAT IS PRACTICE

Practice really isn't about sitting at the piano for 30 minutes everyday.

Practice is about what happens in whatever time you spend at your instrument.

Like a dancer, you move until the movement becomes effortless.

Like the athlete, you do exercises that make you stronger.

Like a scholar, you use your mind to find the answers and look for clues.

Like an artist, you carefully choose the right sounds that communicate your idea.

Each person's journey will be different.

Right first, then fast. Slow, accurate practice puts strong signals into the muscles that can later be accelerated to a flawless performance tempo.

Fingering is the key to faster play. Good technique builds flawless speed.

Proper posture of hands, arms and body plays a critical role in advancing performance. Fingers should be naturally curved with all fingers over the keys. The body should be supported, but relaxed.

Feel the heartbeat of music and place your notes to the rhythm of the music.

See the landscape of phrasing and dynamics and use them to paint the picture or tell the story with sound.

Make your music beautiful. Listen for the rich tones of your instrument. Make it sing the melodies and dance the rhythms.

Memory releases us from the page and lets us connect more intensely to the sounds we are creating.

MESSAGE FOR PARENTS

You play a leading role in your child's successful musical journey.

We are counting on you to maintain the instrument. Playing on a piano that is broken or out of tune is no fun at all. The best time to tune your piano is in the fall after you have switched over to heat.

Help your student find the best times to practice during the week and be their cheerleader.

Find time during the week to be in the room with your child as they practice. (This can be just once a week.) You can relax and listen or work on a project. Just being there helps the student feel that what they are doing is important to you. Give positive encouragement. Comment on the pieces

you like or ask for the titles. Get them talking about music and what they have learned.

You don't need to make corrections unless the student asks for help. Do encourage them to play the piece again faster, softer. Look for small opportunities for students to play for you and others.

WARNING: If practice becomes a battle at home, you have lost the war. Never let practice be a source of arguments, threats or punishments. Positive encouragement nurtures the artist. There will be spells of very little practice and that is expected. It might just be busy schedules or it could be the pieces assigned are becoming more difficult and the student is hesitant to try them alone at home. These times do pass and the music becomes more self motivating with time and confidence. It does take patience, but the results are worth the effort. If lessons are moving along, even slowly, there is no reason to be alarmed. Students have to learn the skills to practice on their own and that is a big part of what lessons are all about. Just playing the pieces over and over doesn't automatically make them better. It can even make some rhythmic errors nearly impossible to correct.