

Categories of Practice Material

(and suggested time distribution for a typical hour's practice)

Slow, legato exercises (5 minutes)
Scales, arpeggios, etc. (20 minutes)
Etudes (20 minutes)
Repertoire (15 minutes)

I. Slow, legato/tuning/tone exercises (from *UNT Clarinet Handbook*)

1. EVERYTHING in this category should be played slowly and with a tuner.
2. Concentrate on:
 - a. correct breathing. Challenge yourself to take deeper, fuller breaths and control the breath flow.
 - b. correcting any faults with the embouchure noted in lessons.
 - c. producing a clear, focused, even tone from register to register.
 - d. incorporating new fingerings into your playing (throat tone resonance fingerings, high register, etc.)
 - e. correcting any problems in hand/finger position noted in lessons. Since these exercises are easy to memorize, practice them in front of a mirror and watch carefully and critically for good hand/finger position (and embouchure)
 - f. accurate intonation. The daily use of a tuner is vital.

II. Scales, arpeggios, etc.

1. Concentrate on:
 - a. "carrying over" all of the considerations from the previous category.
 - b. incorporating new fingerings and finger techniques.
 - c. control. Don't try to play any technical material faster than you can control it.
 - d. using a metronome regularly, and keeping a record of metronome speeds to chart weekly progress.
 - e. even tone quality and even rhythms.

III. Etudes

1. Understand what the study is designed to develop: finger technique, dynamic control and shading, wide interval control, articulation, reading accidentals.
2. Use your dictionary of musical terms to learn any unfamiliar terms.
3. Printing errors are common in the standard etudes. The indicated metronome marking may not be the best one.
4. Look for opportunities to apply new playing techniques, and constantly "carry over" what was practiced and developed in the previous categories.
5. Try to make all etudes "musical." Project clear phrase endings, climaxes, a wide dynamic range, rubato, etc.

IV. Repertoire (Solos, Chamber Music, Orchestral Literature, etc.)

1. If the work is new to you, learn something about the composer, the historical setting of the work, the clarinetist it was written for, availability of recordings, etc.
2. To become more familiar with the whole work, and not just the clarinet part, listen to a recording with a full piano or orchestral score in hand.
3. Learn to pronounce foreign-language names and terms correctly. You will probably encounter them throughout your career.
4. As with any work (or etude) you study, know all of the terminology contained in it.