



VIOLIN

Practice Smart 30 Minutes A Day

by Ann Anderson

As we prepare our classes for a new year of lessons, I would like to suggest you print out a 30-minute practice routine to give to your students to help them balance their time in an efficient and profitable practice session.

Too often many students go home after their lessons and don't pick up their instruments (except for orchestra rehearsals) until the "night before their lesson" the following week. I know you have a few very inspired students who don't need a routine to follow and who are well prepared for their lessons, however I think from past experiences, that is not the general rule.

We had a college student years ago who practiced his cello hours on end on the C Major scale. He couldn't seem to continue to go on to anything else because of his desire to perfect his intonation. Now that is an extreme situation but maybe some students do need a boost to do the best they can each day to try to perfect their skills as the week progresses.

Here is a schedule for you to consider:

Tone Production

- 2 min: Open Strings
 - Bow on: Detaché, Staccato, Martelé
 - Bow off: Spiccato, Ricochet, Sautillé
- 2 min: Vibrato (vary the width of oscillations and the speed)
 - Narrow/Fast
 - Narrow/Slow
 - Wide/Slow
 - Wide/Fast

Intonation / Match Open Strings

- 2 min: Scales. Change keys each week 1-4 sharps and 1-4 flats. (Eventually add several keys each week.) Apply various bowings to the scales as practiced on open strings
- 2 min: Arpeggios matching the scale keys/drill the shifts
- 2 min: Double stops with open strings. (Eventually change to

octaves, thirds and sixths.)

Technical Skills — 5 min

- One etude a week

Orchestral Literature — 5 min

- Each day

Solo Repertoire — 10 min

- Short piece memorized each month. (Select a variety of slow and fast pieces to develop phrasing)
- Concerto: one each year
- Sonata: two each year with a pianist

In my first article, I used Galamian's philosophy of 20 minutes practice and 10 minutes rest. However, that situation was needed when we practiced four to six hours a day. I think our students can put in a full 30 minutes without damaging their arms. Otherwise, suggest 15 minutes, rest, and 15 minutes.

I print up this schedule in large print on a bright gold sheet so it will be easy to find in the music. Now do you think I've covered the bases for a well-prepared lesson? I'll bring my smile to the MMEA convention and we'll talk about your successes. I hope some of your students will give this plan a chance.

Professor Ann Anderson teaches at the University of Minnesota Duluth and plays in the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra as the Associate Concertmaster Emeritus. She received the Distinguished Service Award, Clinic Presenter, Master Teacher Award, and Orchestra Educator of the Year from the Minnesota Music Educators Association. She holds a Masters Degree in violin performance from Indiana University. Josef Gingold, Ivan Galamian, and Norman Carol were her major teachers. ♪