



- **Make Practicing Easier**

## Some things to consider when starting to play an instrument

- **Insist on Private Lessons When Learning a Specific Instrument**

Private lessons are a far superior method of teaching musical instruments. In many school situations your child will be taught in group lessons. The teacher is then forced to divide their attention between 5-10 students in a short amount of time. In a private lesson, the teacher can tailor the lesson to the needs of the student, thereby addressing their strengths and weaknesses. Each student can then learn at their own pace.

- **Take Lessons in a Professional Teaching Environment**

Learning music is not just a matter of having a qualified teacher, but also having an environment that is focused on music education. In a professional lesson studio, a student cannot be distracted by TV, pets, ringing phones, siblings, etc. With a ½ hour of lesson time per week, a professional studio can produce better results since the focus at that time is learning music. Students in a professional environment are also motivated by hearing other students at different levels and by being exposed to a variety of musical instruments. In our music studio, the lessons are not just a hobby or side-line for the teacher but a responsibility which is taken very seriously.

As with anything, improvement takes practice. One of the main problems with music lessons is the drudgery of practicing and the fight between parents and students to practice every day. Here are some ways to make practicing easier:

**Time** - Set the same time every day to practice so it becomes part of a routine or habit. This works particularly well for children. Generally the earlier in the day the practicing can occur, the less reminding is required by parents to get the child to practice.

**Repetition** – We use this method quite often when setting practice schedules for beginners. For a young child 20 or 30 minutes seems like an eternity. Instead of setting a time frame, we use repetition. For example, practice this piece 4 times every day, and this scale 5 times a day. The child then does not pay attention to the amount of time they are practicing their instrument, but knows if they are on repetition number 3 they are almost finished.

**Rewards** – This works very well for both children and adult students. Some adults reward themselves with a cappuccino after a successful week of practicing. Parents can encourage children to practice by granting them occasional rewards for successful practicing. Praise tends to be the most coveted reward – there is no substitute for a pat on the back for a job well done. Sometimes we all have a week with little practicing, in that case there is always next week.

These are very general guidelines. Your teacher may also have suggestions regarding practice time.

*Have Fun!*

*Music should be something that you enjoy for a lifetime. So, try not to put unrealistic expectations on yourself or your children to learn quickly. Everyone learns at a different pace and the key is to be able to enjoy the journey.*

**Cagnoli Music Company** is committed to quality music education by providing private lessons and supporting music education in the schools of Central Pennsylvania. School music programs are an excellent resource to the community, providing lessons and band and orchestra programs to showcase student talent. We hope to enhance these programs by providing individualized lessons geared specifically to the student in a one-on-one setting. Private lessons are also an excellent option for home school students to round out your education. Lessons are available for most instruments earlier in the day to accommodate anyone's schedule.

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