

Stuck at home? Let's Practice!

By Tyler Arcari

Let's face it, practicing can be a little intimidating for those who haven't had private lessons. Sometimes, we just need a little bit of guidance to get going. So below is an introduction to effective practicing.

Step 1: The Set Up

It is important to find a place that is quiet and out of the way. We also want to make sure that we have a dedicated time where we won't have (Electronics - phones/pads/television etc.) or other distractions (like from other people in the house).

- Metronome/Tuner
- Musical Material (scale sheet, warm-up sheet, sheet music etc.)
- A Pencil (let's be honest, you aren't perfect...and that's ok!)
- A Chair (if you need one to play)
- A Music stand (preferably a real one but any flat surface and tape will do...iykyk)

Step 2: The Warm Up

One of the most important parts of a good practice session is the warm up! Below we will spend at least 10-15 minutes on this warm up! **SET A TIMER** the first few times you do this so you get the idea of how much time to spend on each.

2-5 Minutes! **LONG TONES:** Using a steady air stream, play up a major scale of your choice (Concert Bb below for example). Start with a modest length of notes (4 beats @ q= 76) and then increase that in increments etc. **(SEE #1 on your practice sheet)**

Example:

1 Long Tone Exercise
(Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)

mp

5-10 Minutes! **Exercises: #'s 2-4** These exercises are made up of scale work, flexibility or any other fundamental study you can think of. Try any and all kinds, as long as they are consistent and have lots of repetition. **(Try #'s 2-4 on your practice sheet to see what I mean: Feel free to use any other key with these same patterns)**

Example:



Step 3: The Music! (Target Practice)

10-15 minutes

The biggest thing to remember. If you can already play a passage well, it probably does not need to be practiced as much as sections you cannot play as well. I can't tell you how often I hear people practice and go right to the part they like to play (because they can play it well!).

So the trick is to pick one section that really needs work and focusing your practice time for today on just that!

*Let's say the following passage shows up in your music and it's challenging. That is a perfect passage to "practice".



To Practice this passage, we can do many different things other than just play it like we do in class. Here are two examples.

1. **SLOW YOUR ROLL:** For this technique, we will play the entire section really slow, and then when it is perfect 3 times, we can speed it up. Let's say the passage is supposed to be $q = 120$

Example: Play it 3 times at $q = 60$ bpm. If it is perfect all 3 times, then you can bump the metronome up to $q = 64$. However, if you messed up (even just a little) you start back like it is the first time.

2. **Just how I like my Peanut Butter...CHUNKY:** For this technique, we still work slow-to fast, but we chunk the passage into smaller sections.

Example: Play this passage slowly in 2 chunks: M.1-2, and then M. 3-4. Once you can play the chunks at the tempo you are practicing at, put both chunks together. Continue speeding up the chunks **then together** until you get to the tempo you want.

Chunk 1:



Chunk 2:



Step 4: The Warm-Down

5 Minutes

It is very important for you to warm down on your instruments (Especially for brass instruments – Lips) Woodwind players we will warm down too...because there should always be an excuse to play the chromatic scale!

See #5 on your Practice Sheet

Play the Chromatic scale in variations of slow, fast, low and then lowest octave (brass players). Get your mind un-jumbled in the glory that is the scale with all the notes. Relax those fingers and lips and enjoy the soothing release as you end your practice session today.

BONUS: If your cat and/or dog did not leave the room when you started playing consider 100 points extra to Gryffindor!

REPEAT THIS, With variations on keys/exercise interval leaps and music passages for a lovely practicing experience.

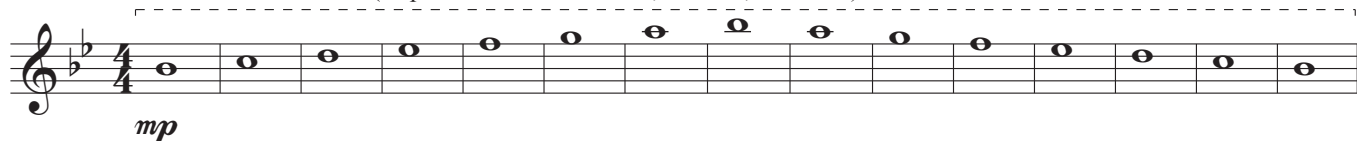
Let's Practice

Home Practice Techniques

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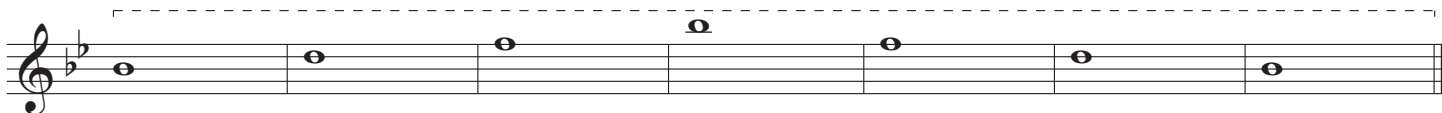
1 Long Tone Exercise

(Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)



Arpeggio

(Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)

**2** "Dat Rona"**3** Thirds**4** Brass Lip Flexibility/WW Finger Flexibility**5** Warm-Down!

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1 Long Tone Exercise

(Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)

Two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff contains a long tone exercise starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking. The second staff contains an arpeggio exercise starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking. Both exercises are marked with a dashed line and the instruction "(Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)".

2 "Dat Rona"

Two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff contains a melody starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking. The second staff contains a melody starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking.

3 Thirds

Two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff contains a melody starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking. The second staff contains a melody starting on G4 and ascending stepwise to G5, with a *mp* dynamic marking.

4 Brass Lip Flexibility/WW Finger Flexibility

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5 Warm-Down!

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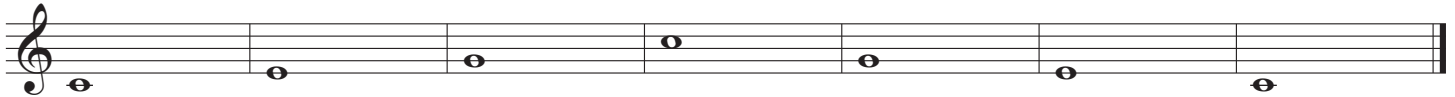
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*mp*

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Arpeggio



2 "Dat Rona"

*mp*

3 Thirds



4 Brass Lip Flexibility/WW Finger Flexibility



5 Warm-Down!



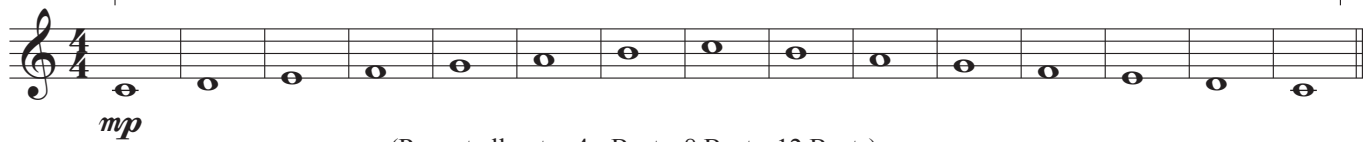
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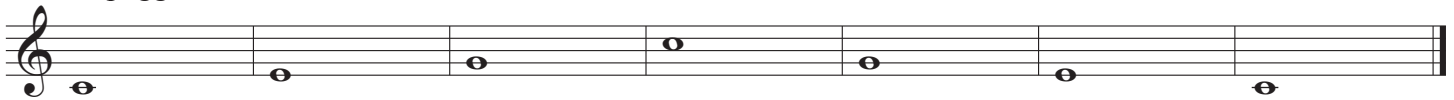
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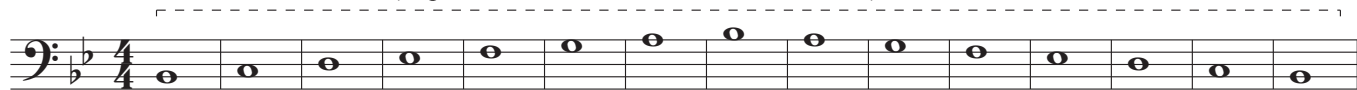
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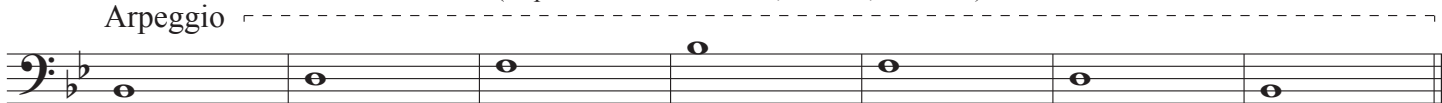
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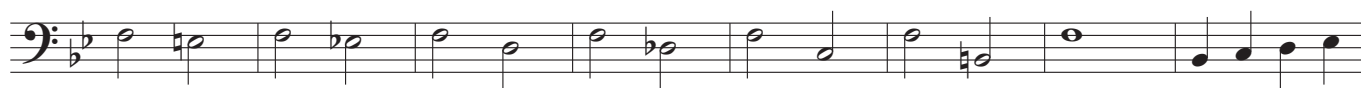
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*mp*

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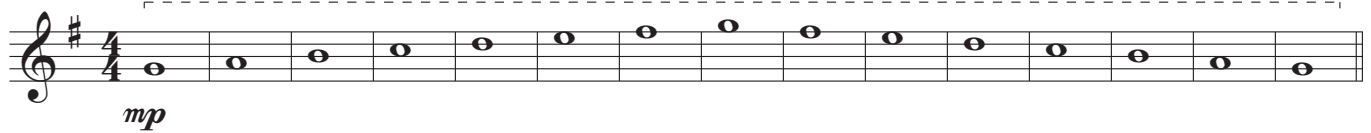
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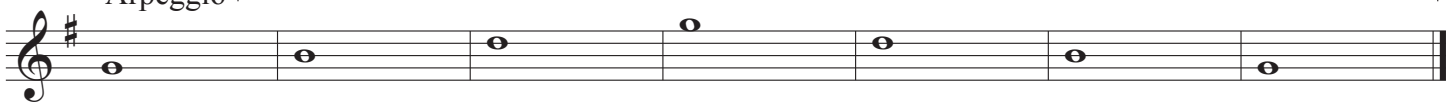
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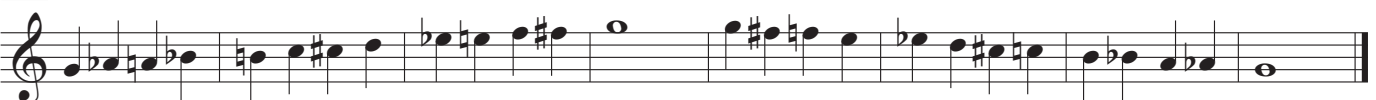
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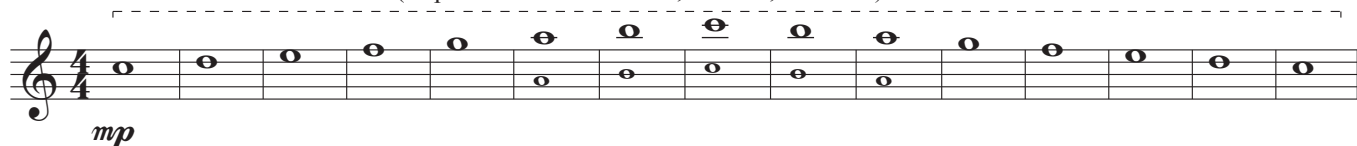
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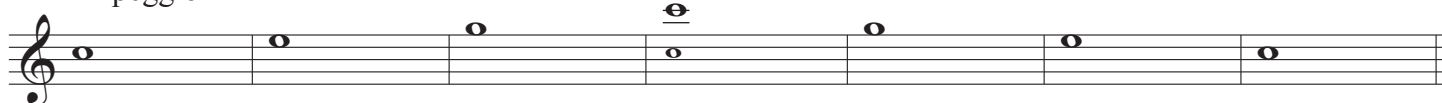
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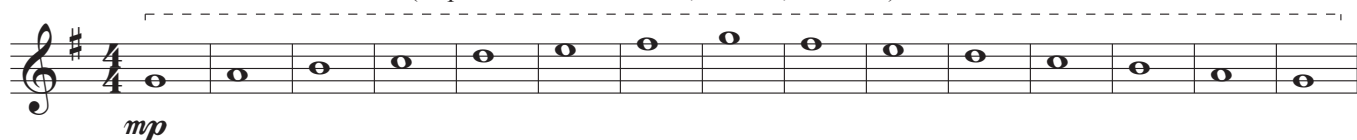
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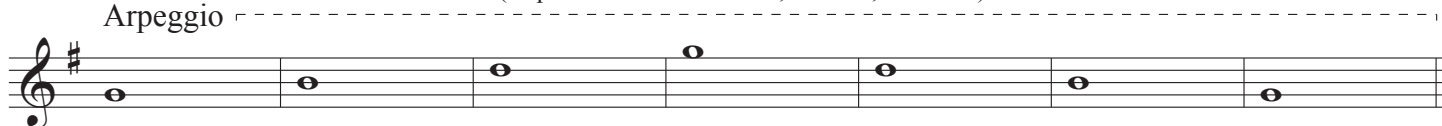
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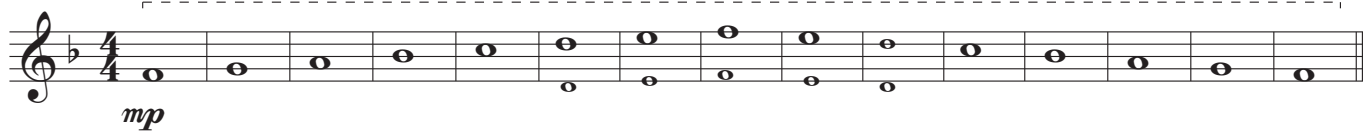
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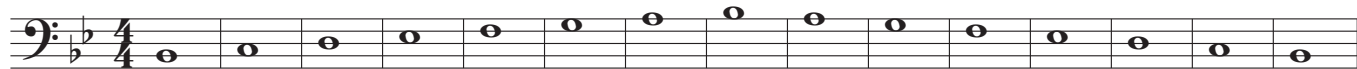
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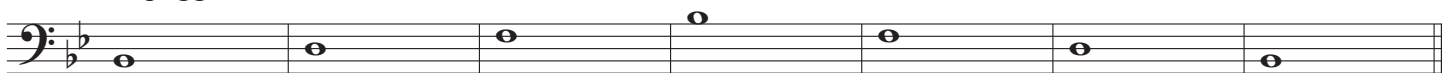
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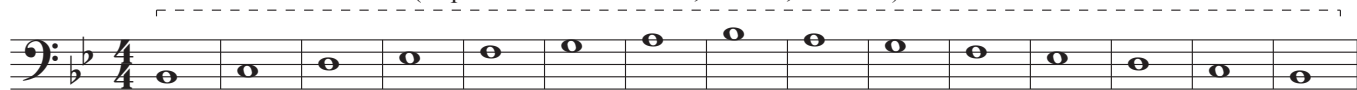
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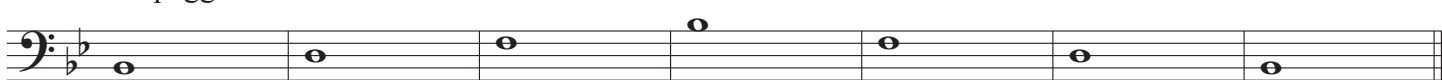
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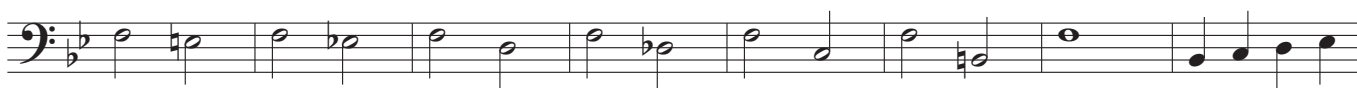
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*mp*

Arpeggio (Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)



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1 Long Tone Exercise

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mp (Repeat all notes 4 - Beats, 8 Beats, 12 Beats)

Arpeggio

Musical notation for the bass line of 'The Rose Tree'. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a sequence of notes: a whole note G2, a whole note F2, a whole note E2, a half note D2, a whole note C2, a whole note B1, and a whole note A1. The notes are written on a grand staff with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat.

2 "Dat Rona"

Musical notation for the bass line of 'The Rose Tree'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a final half note. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is indicated at the beginning.

Musical notation for the bass line of 'The Rose Tree'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some beamed eighth notes in the final measure.

3 Thirds

Musical notation for the bass line of "The Rose Tree" in G major, 3/4 time. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a half note.

[illegible]

4 Brass Lip Flexibility/WW Finger Flexibility

A musical staff in bass clef showing three measures. The first measure contains two eighth notes, G₂ and F₂, tied across the barline. The second measure contains one quarter note, E₂. The third measure contains two eighth notes, D₂ and C₂, also tied across the barline. A slur covers all four notes (G-F-E-D-C) across the entire phrase.

The musical notation for the bass staff shows three measures. The first measure contains two eighth notes, G2 and F2, beamed together. The second measure contains two eighth notes, E2 and D2, also beamed together. The third measure contains two eighth notes, C2 and B1, beamed together. Each pair of notes is followed by a whole rest. A slur spans across all six notes from the beginning of the first measure to the end of the third measure.

5 Warm-Down!

The bass line of 'The Rose Tree' is written on a single staff with a bass clef. It begins with a C2 (one ledger line below the staff) and proceeds with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including some beamed pairs. The melody ends with a final C2 note and a double bar line.