

# Aaron Bloom's Piano Studio

## Correct vs. Incorrect Practice Habits

Correct Practicing Habits	Incorrect Practicing Habits
1. Scales/Warm ups are done at the beginning of home practice.	1. Scales/warm-ups are not done at all, or played too hurriedly.
2. The metronome is used as instructed.	2. The metronome is not used correctly.
3. Tricky section(s) are practiced over and over until they sound fluent.	3. Tricky sections are skipped or not practiced over and over enough.
4. You hear a mix of practice speeds, especially slow.	4. You hear lots of fast playing.
5. Tricky sections are practiced several times hands alone.	5. Tricky sections are skipped or played with many errors.
6. Attention is given to correct fingering and fixing mistakes marked on the music.	6. Fingerings are ignored, for the most part. Mistakes that are marked on the music are ignored.
7. Counts aloud the tricky rhythmic sections as instructed at lessons.	7. Does not count aloud.
8. Theory workbook assignments are done before the student comes to a lesson.	8. Theory is done in the car on the way to the lesson or not at all.
9. A correct amount of time per day is being spent <b>consistently</b> at the piano. An appropriate daily home-practice time is set at your lesson.	9. Time spent at the piano practicing is not consistent with what is recommended for your age/level.
10. Practice is spread out over the entire week between lessons. The minimum number of days for practicing each week is 4. 5 is ideal, 6 is outstanding! Practicing shortly after a lesson is very effective.	10. Practice is limited to 0-3 days between lessons. Practice is concentrated on the day of the lesson, prior to the lesson.

As always, feel free to contact Aaron to discuss any of these issues!

## Additional Suggestions for Piano Practice

1. Remind your kids to practice daily!
2. Consider establishing a specific time of day that is set aside for practicing.
3. Short Term Goal Setting: Set and reinforce a reasonable practice time and goal for one particular day or for one week's worth of practice.
4. Long Term Goal Setting: Establish and remind kids of their long-term goals with piano such recital performances, festivals, syllabus, etc. Help them keep perspective: "I know that it is hard work now, but look how beautiful/how cool this piece will sound when you've learned it!"
5. Quality vs. Quantity: Remember that you can get as much done in 10 minutes of correct practicing vs. 30 minutes of sloppy practicing.
6. Sit in on some lessons and take some notes. This is a good way to reinforce at home the concepts being asked of them at their lesson. Ask me questions!
7. Be encouraging! You do not have to read music to listen to them practice and offer positive reinforcement. "Wow, Sally—that sounds MUCH better than it did two days ago. Can I hear it again?" Review my "Do's and Don'ts" for parents, available on my website.
8. Cramped for time one week? Sick? Been out of town? My teacher used to tell me not to throw away days where an entire practice can't be accomplished. Instead, even a partial practice is better than nothing. In these situations:
  - a. Spend 5 minutes only on scales/warm-ups.
  - b. Spend 10 minutes working on 2 or 3 challenging sections in one of your pieces.
  - c. Work hands alone on a challenging section.
  - d. Play though a polished/learned piece a couple of times for a small audience.
  - e. Spend 5 minutes checking to make sure your theory is done.
9. Take some time to review with your kids the differences between correct and incorrect practicing. Don't just do this once—revue this list periodically with your kids.

***Please remember that you don't have to read music to do any of the above. Establishing a practice structure and some positive encouragement can go a LONG way!***