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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [Paul Artola](#) on Wed, 06 Feb 2008 19:00:45 GMT  
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It has been decades since my formal piano training, but the exercises in Hanon come to mind as working on speed, agility, and accuracy.

- Paul Artola  
Ellicott City, Maryland

On 7 Feb 2008 05:50:36 +1000, "chuck duffy" <c@c.com> wrote:

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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [Paul Artola](#) on Wed, 06 Feb 2008 19:02:34 GMT  
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<http://www.amazon.com/Virtuoso-Pianist-60-Exercises-Technique/dp/0793525446>

- Paul

On Wed, 06 Feb 2008 14:00:45 -0500, Paul Artola <artola@comcast.net> wrote:

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Posted by [chuck duffy](#) on Wed, 06 Feb 2008 19:50:36 GMT  
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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [Kim](#) on Wed, 06 Feb 2008 21:01:26 GMT  
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Chuck,

While this isn't an exercise, one thing I have both noticed in my own experience, as well as hearing of scientific support for, is the idea of not practicing for an hour at a time, but instead doing several shorter periods as a general approach. The mind has a very limited attention span at maximum focus, and practicing while bored and/or annoyed with the process is not that beneficial.

Generally when I practice I will just sit down and play as I feel like it. Ten minutes later I'll get up and do something else. Practice becomes like a cigarette break. If I'm doing housework, every half an hour I might stop and play one or two songs. If I'm inspired I'll keep going but if not I get up and go back to whatever else I was doing.

I don't remember the exact numbers, but I believe it was something like three ten minute practice sessions are measurably more affective than a single one hour session.

Knowing this might help you manage your limited time better. Not only can you put less time in, but it's a lot easier for most people to find five or ten minutes a couple of times a day to quickly jump on an instrument than it is to find a solid hour. Playing in the ad breaks while watching TV, for example, you can probably approach the same benefit from an hour of TV watching as you would from an hour of practice.

You do need to put in longer sessions at points, if only to improve playing stamina, but things like scales and arpeggios only take about 15 seconds to do. You can do quite a few of them in just a couple of minutes. Plus, if you do, say, two five minute sessions in the morning, and then another four or so five minute sessions through the day or at night, the brain actually prioritizes it better because it gets the idea that "Gee, I seem to be doing this all the time!". Your brain gets the idea that it needs to have those skills ready because they are constantly needed.

Cheers,  
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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen

Posted by [TCB](#) on Wed, 06 Feb 2008 22:26:03 GMT

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I find this to be true as well, but mostly for maintaining a certain level of facility. To make a big jump, I think the only option is out there in the woodshed.

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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [chuck duffy](#) on Thu, 07 Feb 2008 17:36:05 GMT  
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Thanks for the input guys. I'm definitely down with what kim was saying. I found that many smaller sessions get me better much faster. I hope that someday soon I can find some time to take it to the woodshed too...

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Posted by [steve the artguy](#) on Thu, 07 Feb 2008 22:00:17 GMT  
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Useful as in "learning to negotiate chord progressions in different keys"  
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Posted by [chuck duffy](#) on Thu, 07 Feb 2008 22:26:59 GMT  
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My buddies are working on a cd, and they send me roughs to practice.

Since I didn't write the songs, they are not in my 'keys' so to speak, the

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So I practice each one over and over and then I try and go up to NY and we record in their home studio on their old steinway.

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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [Paul Artola](#) on Thu, 07 Feb 2008 22:51:15 GMT  
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Chuck -

If you are playing on a digital keyboard, you could transpose the root

note so you are in your comfort zone.

- Paul

On 8 Feb 2008 08:26:59 +1000, "chuck duffy" <c@c.com> wrote:

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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
Posted by [chuck duffy](#) on Fri, 08 Feb 2008 01:47:17 GMT  
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Hi Paul,

That's what I was doing to practice, but my buddies have this nice old steiny at the house, and when I get there - well there is no substitute :-)

Chuck

Paul Artola <artola@comcast.net> wrote:

>Chuck -

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>If you are playing on a digital keyboard, you could transpose the root note so you are in your comfort zone.

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>- Paul

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>On 8 Feb 2008 08:26:59 +1000, "chuck duffy" <c@c.com> wrote:

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>>steve i truly think we have a psychic connection :-). First I love monk.

Second,

>>for the first time in my life I am working through chord progressions in

>>a variety of keys.

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>>My buddies are working on a cd, and they send me roughs to practice.

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>>Since I didn't write the songs, they are not in my 'keys' so to speak, the

>>ones I gravitate to for my tiny vocal range.

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>>So I practice each one over and over and then I try and go up to NY and we

>>record in their home studio on their old steinway.

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>>For example, one of the tunes was a bluesy tune in F# which forced me to

>>do all my regular 'slides' like where I would slide off e# to e or g# to

>>g. I had to switch to moving rapidly between two flats (a# to b#) instead

>>of sliding from black key to white with a single finger. Totally unnatural

>>for me, but after a week or so I got to where I could play the tune well



>>in a country/bluesy style in f#. That got me thinking - why shouldn't I  
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Subject: Re: recommendations for good practice regimen  
 Posted by [steve the artguy](#) on Fri, 08 Feb 2008 10:00:48 GMT  
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Chuck-

Using the transpose button reminds me somewhat of using a capo.

Sure, you can learn your licks and just slide them up and down the neck (or transpose your keyboard to do the same.) It will sound good to the audience. But you won't be progressing.

I remember seeing someone play who impressed me mightily. Found out he played everything in G and transposed the keyboard.

Personally, I think it's just so much more fun to actually learn the licks in the different keys. Each key is different (obviously) but in ways you wouldn't anticipate. Playing the same tune in different keys is a challenge, and adventure, and hard work followed by a sense of joy and accomplishment that you just don't get by pushing the transpose button.

The first time someone asked me to accompany them on some standard, I forget what it was, Misty or Someone to Watch Over Me, or something, and they asked for it in F#, and I pulled it off, I felt like I was finally beginning to get a grip on this keyboard thing.

-steve

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