



## Suzuki Parent Education Week IV: How Much Should We Practice?

### I. Practice vs. Playing

- a. Before discussing how much practice we should do each day, it is important to realize not all time with the violin is practice time!
- b. "Practicing is not just spending time with your instrument AND Time spend with your instrument is not automatically practicing." – Tom Heany, *First, Learn to Practice*

Playing	Practicing
Focus on making music	Focus on correct motions
Enjoyment from playing well	Enjoyment from getting better
Playing whole pieces	Playing short sections
Musical thinking	Mechanical/Technical thinking
"How was I just now?"	"Am I getting better?"
Most decisions have already been made	Making decisions all the time
Feeling	Thinking

### II. Mindless Practice

- a. Simple repetition (repeat this 10 times or practice this for 15 minutes)
- b. Autopilot (play until we hear something wrong, stop, repeat the passage a few times, then go on until the next hiccup)
- c. Checkboxes (making sure to practice every lesson point without focus on improvement)
- d. Feel Good Practice (playing only things we're good at, and avoiding challenging things)
- e. Disengaged practice (doing only what mom/dad say to do, without any evaluation)
- f. All these have elements of good practice- repetition, listening, focus on lesson points, solidifying things, and cooperating with parents are all good! However, mindless practice lacks the focus and commitment that makes us better

### III. Deliberate Practice

- a. This is the only kind of practice we should to strive for. It is very, very difficult to maintain!
- b. Dr. Noa Kageyama writes, "Deliberate practice is a **systemic** and **highly structured** activity, which is, for lack of a better word, *scientific*. Instead of mindless trial and error, it is an **active** and **thoughtful** process of **experimentation** with **clear goals** and **hypothesis**. . . Few musicians take the time to stop, analyze what went wrong, why it happened, and how they can correct the error **permanently**."

### IV. So how much should we practice?

- a. Adapted from Kurt Sassmanshaus, head of the Starling Program at Cincinnati Conservatory of Music recommendations for how much to practice:

Just for fun	Young Artist track
Age 2-4: 0-15 minutes/day	Age 2-4: 15-30 minutes/day
Age 5: 30 minutes/day	Age 5: 30-45 minutes/day
Age 8: 45-60 minutes/day	Age 8: 90-120 minutes/day
Age 10: 60-75 minutes/day	Age 10: 2 hours/day
Age 12+: 90-10 minutes/day	Age 12: 2-3 hours/day
	Age 14-18: 3-4 hours/day
	Competition/College Major: 5-7 hours/day

**Next Week:** Summer Programs- beyond lessons and group classes!