

# Practicing your instrument

## For winds

### Warm Up (5-10 minutes)

Play long tones (Exercise 1, breathing exercise, 9 count tones)

Get your fingers moving (Exercise 2, 3, 5, or 6)

Brass: Lip Slurs / Open up your high range

### Memorize / Learn Music (15 - 45 minutes)

These steps can be repeated with any music, including selections from our field show or our on field warmup.

To Learn:

- Pick a measure of music which you currently can't play/have difficulty with
- Look at the key signature and take notice of any accidentals
- Sub-divide each rhythm and figure out where each note falls (1, and a 2, etc)
- Sing the rhythm a few times to yourself
- Set your metronome<sup>1</sup> at a very slow tempo and see how the rhythm works with a steady beat (60-72 bpm)
- Play the phrase with the metronome repeatedly until you can do it with the right notes and rhythm in time.
- Slowly begin to bump up the metronome 2-4 bpm, verifying you can play the phrase at that speed *at least 3 times in a row*. Only then can you continue to increase the metronome speed.
- Once you've hit the correct tempo on the metronome, stop and try playing the phrase in context. If that is difficult at tempo, pull back the speed until you can play it. Then slowly increase the tempo.

To Memorize:

- Select a short passage which you don't know (No longer than 4 measures long)
- Play that passage a few times (4 - 5) looking at the music until you can play it reasonably well.
- Turn your music around and try playing just that passage from memory.
- Turn the music back over. Look at notes which you forgot. Play the passage a few more times.
- Repeat, flipping the music back over, until that section is memorized.
- Play that section in context (Start playing 4 / 5 measures before and, if you can, 4 / 5 measures after without music).
- Once you can do that, pick a new section and repeat the entire process.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.webmetronome.com/>

## **Warm Down (5 minutes)**

Long, low tones  
Buzz your lips