

# Warren Band Practicing Guidelines for Students and Parents

## THE SETTING:

- Pick a location in your house that has a minimum amount of distractions. Practicing in front of the TV or in a room full of people is not conducive to concentration.
- Pick a time that you can practice without interruption. That includes considering how your sounds will effect the others in your home.
- Make sure you have everything in the area you need – music, reeds, metronome, etc.

## HALF-HOUR PRACTICE ROUTINE (Double these times for an hour routine):

0-5 Minutes: Prep time and warm up

- Assemble instrument and practice equipment. Minimize distractions
- Set a goal or goals for the practice period (in this half-hour, I will be able to play measures 32-38 better than when I started, etc.)
- Begin with either air through the horn exercises, buzzing on the mouthpiece, long tones, or basic taps, rolls, and accent exercises

5-15 Minutes: Technique work

- Work on **SCALES**. Use the methods we do in band (say the letter names alone, speak the letters while playing the fingerings, play the scale at the same tempo you said the letters). Work on the scales you **CAN'T** play, not the ones you **CAN**
- Brass players, work on **LIP SLURS**. Use the technique sheets from your lessons or play basic slurs you've learned. Work for **SPEED, FLEXIBILITY, and RANGE**. Remember that the key is to make you **AIR** work hard so that your chops don't have to. If you can't reach a pitch, play on the mouthpiece only and **SCOOP** up to the pitch from a lower sound.
- Percussionists, work on **RUDIMENTS**. Play the basics at faster and faster tempos. **USE A METRONOME** to work for evenness and accuracy. Practice both right and left hand lead. Work on **SIGHT READING** rhythms. The more you force yourself to read and figure out rhythms, the better you'll get.

15-25 Minutes: Performance music work

- Pick one or two spots from your concert music to focus on. Playing through the entire song will **NOT** help you to improve quickly.
- Don't just play it wrong over and over again – if you do, you're practicing the mistake!
- Each time you play, **BE YOUR OWN BAND DIRECTOR**. Listen and analyze what you play. Try to figure out what was inaccurate about what you played and how to fix it.
- If going from one pitch to the next is the problem, practice those two notes back and forth. Break it down and get as specific as possible, then plug it back into the measure and play a larger chunk.
- **\*\*\*\*\*PRACTICE SLOWLY!\*\*\*\*\*** Allow your mind the time it needs to make the correct messages go to your fingers, hands, lungs, etc. Success will come when you **TRAIN YOUR BODY** to do the right thing by **GETTING IT RIGHT OVER AND OVER**.
- Excellence takes time! Be patient with yourself. Allow yourself to make mistakes. Anything worth doing is worth the time you invest in it. If you get frustrated, move on to something else or take a short break. Sometimes walking away from it for a few moments and getting your mind on something else will get you immediate improvement when you try it again. **DON'T GIVE UP!**

25-30 Minutes: **FUN TIME!!!**

- Take the time to play a song you're good at, or the part of the band music that you like the best
- Try playing some "free form" music. It's really fun to just make up something and enjoy the unique sounds that you make. Some of the best compositions in the world began as the composer just "messing around with some ideas." Or, figure out a melody from your favorite movie or TV show.