

Linda Yeo Leonard's Guidelines for a Good Practice Session

1. Warm-up. The warm-ups that I gave to you should work just fine to get you going on the horn.
2. Play 2-3 scales, either ones that I have assigned to you, or other ones, if you already know the ones I gave to you very well. Scales are the foundation of music, and you will be a better player if you know all of them very well. Work up to two octaves on as many as you can.
3. Play through the first piece I assigned to you. (By play, I mean make it from the beginning to the end without stopping, but have your ears open to what you're playing, and take note of where you play well, and where you make mistakes.)
4. Go back, and practice the parts where you made mistakes. (By practice, I mean go over the parts, 1-2 measures at a time, slower than normal, listening to every note.) Your brain needs to understand what you missed and why you missed it. Mistakes are good, but only if you learn from them.

If you miss a certain couple of notes, practice just those, until you get them 4-5 times in a row perfectly. If you get to the third time through, and you play a wrong note, start all over again. => That's how you get better! Then add some notes to the beginning and end, making it a 2-3 measure section. This will put the hard notes back into their place in the music.

Sometimes if it's a very fast passage (lots of 16th notes) it'll be important to slow everything down to quarter notes. This is great, because then your brain hears all of the notes you're supposed to be playing, and when you speed it back up, your brain knows what it's supposed to hear.

5. At the end of practicing a piece, make sure that you play it all the way through, so you know how it sounds altogether.

Listen! Listen! Listen!