

2025 Performance Confidence Practice

Practice Ideas for Performance Confidence

Practice makes progress, let go of the outcome and stay focused on the process.

~ mc yogi

1. **Body Scan:** Do a body scan to release tension and be aware of your whole body. Start at top of your head all the way down to your feet. Ask each part to soften and let go of tension. **We need a body that can let go of extra tension while also being lively, playful and energized!** Making music is a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual activity. It is vital to be connected to your spirit & music AND to your body and breath with a clear mindset and calm mind for a meaningful and successful performance.
2. **Breathing:** We are artists of the breath and your breath is your wind power. Keep connecting, to your breath how you are using it. This is key to your music making and an excellent performance. **Breathing Ideas:** 2 inhale's through nose and a **LONG exhale** through mouth. At least 3 times before playing. This will help calm your nervous system. **Box Breathing** also grounds the nervous system 4 in, 4 hold, 4 exhale, 4 hold & repeat. **8-7-4**, 8 counts exhale, 7, hold & 4 inhale. 8-7-4 breath is good when are feeling anxious. **Nose Breathing**, breath deeply through your **nose**, calms nervous system and is a good to take right before you play. **Winding** on your hand to feel 4 V's - vowels, velocity, volume, and vibrato. Winding is excellent to do before playing and when you are waiting so long before auditioning.
3. **Mindset:** How we think is as important as what we are doing. **This takes discipline and consistent practice.** Also making time and the courage to take mock auditions many times before your audition. How is your mindset in general about yourself, the music and the audition? Notice what you are thinking and how it makes you feel. Don't let nervousness take over. Instead *Flip the Feeling*. *And it is important to do this within seconds of having the feeling.* For example: I am feeling nervous and my mind is racing and my palms are sweaty and I want to do well on this audition. You may say to yourself: Well, this is my excited nervous system!. **I acknowledge my feelings, and can not let the emotions control me. Flip the Feeling. I can instead think encouraging thoughts.** I can do a body scan to release some tension. I can become aware of my breath and choose a breathing pattern to help calm connect myself to my wind power. I can remember that I have practiced well and am prepared. I can trust myself to do my best in this moment. I can enjoy sharing **my** version of the music. I can **instead** of focusing on being nervous - **focus on** releasing tension, connect to my breath, listening to the music inside myself. I **CAN** be mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically engaged for my beautiful performance. **Be in the process, not the outcome.**

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4. **Visualize and Hear** yourself playing well at the audition. This takes constant practice of using these tools and skills. Practice this before recording yourself and when taking auditions. It takes time to use this practice and be detailed about it. For example: walking into the room, how do you feel, mindset, body & breath? Sitting in ready chair, up at stand, preparing to play, breathing, long tone, breathing, playing, ending... Being in the **PROCESS**, the action, the physical, mental, emotional connection, the moment by moment of playing and making music. This practice can be very helpful for learning to calm your nerves and clear your mind. To connect to mindset you want. To practice focusing on hearing the music inside yourself, at your tempo and with your sound and your phrasing. The more clarity you gain using visualization consistently, the more confidence you will develop.

Clarity, Connection, Creativity, Consistency = Confidence.

5. **Pre- Audition/Performance Routine:** Know the routine that helps you play your best before you play an audition. This can also include the whole day you play. For example: good nights sleep, a positive mindset, think encouraging thoughts *flip the feeling*, plenty of water and **no** caffeine, eat well. Know your schedule for the day. Bringing what you need to audition, flute, music, metronome, clothes to stay warm, snack, ear plugs, homework, book, drawing stuff... Practice this at mock auditions to know which ones help you the most. **Connect to your Breath - Body - Instrument - Music.** Having a **LONG TONE Warm Up** before your audition is essential to a good audition. Practice knowing **how you will begin each cut** of the etude **BEFORE** you play. **Your mindset, connection to breath, body, instrument, warm up note, tempo and hearing music before you start playing.** **LISTENING** to your sound **IN WHOLE ROOM/Hall**, vs. just in front of your face. This helps whole body playing and calming your nerves.
6. **Record self/ mock audition:** Play mock auditions, record yourself while practicing these tools and skills. Test out what it is like to really try these things **before** you take your Region audition. **Video yourself** at each practice. **Listen to, watch your video and then practice based on what you hear.** Take as many mock auditions and playing for people as you can to practice your tools and these skills. **Playing auditions is a skill set that you can build up and get better at doing.** Especially if you try different things at each mock audition to see what helps you. Then you will have the **mindset, the tools, the skills and have had the coaching/teaching** that you need for creating **your** best performances and auditions.