



By Stephane Chamberland

Practice Like A Jedi

Do you practice a lot? Do you feel like you need to practice hours per day? Do you feel guilty when you don't practice enough?

I want to share some interesting things I have learned over the years that have helped me achieve better results in less time with less effort using better principles of practice. That's what we all want, right? To have fun, learn fast, and keep the motivational cycle going for unending improvement?

Finding A Coach

Having a great teacher is like having a great trainer at the gym. Finding someone who can evaluate your level and build you a personalized program based on your goals and interests will bring you to developing...

An Effective Practice Program

A great program could contain a little bit of technique on the pads for hands and feet and a number of reading exercises focusing on the snare drum and the whole kit. Also, great drumset exercises might focus on groove-and-fill in various styles with a number of variations while incorporating developmental exercises such as independence, interdependence, and coordination. Another thing you should be doing is using playalong tracks and, most importantly, ...

Playing With Other Musicians

When you learn something new, call your musician friends to come jam with you. Start applying your new ideas and exercises in a live setting. This will push you towards

becoming a great performer. It will also help you to connect your musical evolution by playing in form and filling in between. Regardless of how good you are in solo practice, you will open a whole other world in a real, honest-to-goodness live musical setting. Your brain will work differently and your playing will improve tremendously.

Goals & Time

I believe in setting precise goals and staying with the same material for a good period of time. I remember when I was so excited about learning new stuff that I would practice five or six books per day – all different subjects – and felt like I was pushing myself to the top. It was shocking when, many years later, I realized that I had only mastered about 20 per cent of that material. By taking our time, we actually save time in the long run. Focus on the same material for at least two weeks. There is a huge difference between “knowing” your material “owning” it.

Record Yourself

I can't stress it enough. The way you think you play is not necessarily the way it actually sounds. Like when you speak, the way you hear your voice and the way people hear you could be different. If you start recording your speech and getting used to your own voice, you will get a better idea of what others are hearing. Set up a camera on your drums and make sure you spend the same amount of time listening to yourself as playing and recording. Recording only the audio is a great start but I am a big fan of using video as well. Drumming is all

about motions and emotions. Study your sound and your technique and compare it with your favourite drummers.

The Power Of The Pause

When facing a challenge, it's not necessary to keep pushing too hard and beating your head against the wall. Your brain and body can only absorb so much. Like eating, you can eat as much as you want as long as you let your body digest the food before the next meal. I am sure you have had the experience of practicing something seemingly impossible one day, only to play it with ease after you stop and come back to it the next day. This is what I call the “power of the pause” – a concept borrowed from Dom Famularo's book, *The Cycle of Self Empowerment*.

Relax, Relax & Relax

One of the secrets of a great practice is to empty your mind and relax. Abandon physical and mental tensions. If you start thinking too much, you will disconnect from the moment. Practicing is like meditation. Observe yourself and understand how you learn and treat yourself as if you were your own student, because that's exactly what you are; you are simultaneously the teacher and the student. Tools like perseverance, patience, and focus are must-haves.

This approach will help you not only in your drumming, but also in your life when attempting to accomplish anything. Have fun and share your experience with as many people as possible so your talent will grow.