

10 Tips for Practising without the Piano

1. Instigate a happy positive mind set before practice begins; it's amazing the effect this can have on learning capacity.
2. Before practice commences, aim to sit at the instrument with a relaxed posture; shoulders down, hands hanging freely by your side, breathing slowly, and thinking positively.
3. Consider the piece you are about to practice; how does it make you feel?
4. As you observe the score, note what happens in each hand; the movements, fingerings and gestures required to play the patterns. It can be particularly helpful to pay special attention to the left hand here too.
5. Sing each musical line alone at first, then combine it with various parts on the piano, playing and singing simultaneously.
6. Some find it helpful to write the piece out on manuscript paper.
7. As you work at the piano, begin to test your memory during practice sessions; by repeatedly returning to the same phrases and passages over a period of time, the thought responses become stronger and clearer.
8. Play the piece through in your mind. The effort and assimilation required can come as quite a shock, but once accustomed to the relevant mind set needed, a calmness and stillness is acquired, and it becomes possible to 'think' through the music accurately.
9. Now visualise watching yourself play it at the keyboard as an image in your mind. It can be a good idea to envisage every detail; fingerings, movements, and everything necessary to play the piece from beginning to end successfully.
10. Try to work rigorously and scrupulously, without ever losing concentration. This type of focus can only aid practice and thorough absorption of a piece.

