

DR. SHUMATE – VOICE STUDIO – WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

To make optimal use of your practice time follow the guidelines below:

- Whatever effects the body, effects the voice. Good singing is the result of maintaining health of body, mind, and spirit. Use the information in “Advice For Care Of The Voice” (www.texasvoicecenter.com – on my website) to help you create and maintain healthy vocal habits.
- Regularly scheduled practice times are essential for significant musical advancement.
- Short practice sessions (10-25) minutes multiple times a day, rather than longer practice sessions, produce a more optimal result by helping you to maintain concentration and prevent vocal fatigue.
- Practice a minimum of six hours a week for a two credit lesson.
- Create and focus on a clear set of goals for each practice session.
- Record your rehearsals and performances and listen to these recordings to find elements that need improvement.
- A practice session consists of:
 - 1) A quick review of your “20 Statement.” (See below)
 - 2) Checking for any head or body tension which can be released.
 - 3) Reminding yourself of the fundamentals of healthy singing technique including posture, breathing, and tongue placement, while enjoying a feeling of resonance of your tone inside your head and body, that is free of unnecessary tension.
 - 4) Warming up with your personal vocal exercises that help you create a free and supported tone.
 - 5) Learning your music, text, pronunciation, and translation.
 - Learn music, text, pronunciation, and translations in small sections, then review what you learned each practice session before you move on to a new section.
 - To optimize your practice sessions, maintain a practice log and use “markers” in your score, so that you know exactly where you are in the learning process with each song.
 - Never practice full-voice until all notes and rhythms are learned correctly. When you can hear the correct notes and rhythms in your head, you are ready to sing with your supported voice.
 - 6) Using a mirror to minimize unnecessary tensions in your head and body, while creating emotion connections to your text. Your facial expressions should “read” to an audience in any reasonable sized venue.
 - 7) Practicing “performing” with musical accuracy and emotional expression reflected in face and with body.

NOTE: Depending on your work ethic, vocal and musicianship skill level, some elements may be more challenging than others and vary in time commitment.

20 STATEMENTS

Create and maintain a written set of goals for your vocal development. Focus *always* and *only* on what you *do* want. Read them ALL daily.

Ex. – When I perform, I will not *forget the words* of my song. (Your mind hears, “forget the words.”)

- Rewrite ex. – When I perform, I always *remember the words* because I have an *emotion connection to the text*.
 - (You are reinforcing, “remember the words,” “emotional connection to the text.”)

Ex. – I will sing my high notes without any *tension or stress*. (Your mind hears, “tension,” “stress.”)

- Rewrite ex. – I sing all my high notes while enjoying an *ease and an openness* in my throat accompanied with *continuous free following breath* energy.
 - (You are reinforcing, “ease and openness,” “continuous free following breath.”)