



## **At-Home Practice Expectations and Suggestions**

As with any skill that we want to learn and improve, learning to sing well requires practice outside of the weekly lesson time. It is fairly obvious that practice is essential in order to learn songs. In addition, the highly physical nature of the vocal instrument requires daily use to maintain muscular strength and aerobic fitness. The following paragraphs explain Snyder School of Singing's practice expectations for students in grades K-12. When students are adequately prepared for their lessons and in good vocal shape, the time spent with the teacher is a much more positive experience for both parties.

### **Grades K-5:**

Students should practice 10-20 minutes per day. Practice time should include completing theory homework and listening assignments, and singing assigned songs with recorded accompaniment tracks. Parents should check the lesson notebook for specific goals for the week.

### **Grades 6-12:**

Students in grades 6-8 should practice 15-30 minutes per day. Students in grades 9-12 who plan to major in music/musical theater in college should practice 30-45 minutes per day; all others should practice 30 minutes per day. Students should record the warmup in every lesson without reminder from the teacher. Practice time should include completing theory homework and sight-singing assignments (if applicable), singing the exercises on the warmup recording, completing song research assignments, and working on assigned songs with recorded accompaniment tracks. Students should check the lesson notebook for specific goals for the week.

### **Practice Suggestions:**

1. Find a practice space for your child that allows them to sing loudly and make mistakes without feeling like they are on display for the rest of the family. Teens tend to be especially self-conscious.
2. Singing is a highly personal expression requiring great vulnerability, and technical skills often develop slowly as the body matures. Refrain from criticizing the sounds that you hear your child make. If you have questions about your child's singing, ask their teacher.
3. Schedule short, daily practice sessions into the calendar and encourage your child to follow through. Consider the benefits of helping your child cultivate self-discipline.
4. Even professionals "don't feel like" practicing every day. If your child is reluctant, it is fine to have them take a day off from their assignments and spend time singing songs they enjoy.
5. Elementary school students are often more compliant and willing to practice in the morning before school than they are late in the day when they are tired.

6. Elementary school students (and others!) love incentives. Try creating a practice chart with 30 squares to be crossed off and a reward for its completion. Offer a piece of candy after a practice session.
7. If your child is ill or hoarse, encourage them to rest their voice and concentrate on non-vocal practice tasks. It can be detrimental to sing in these circumstances.

**Red flags that at-home practice is not what it should be:**

1. The student can't remember what songs they are working on, which book they are in, or what page they are on.
2. The student doesn't know what assignments were written in the lesson notebook at the previous lesson.
3. The student is unfamiliar with the melody of their assigned songs.
4. The student is given the same critiques on their songs every week with no improvement.
5. The student is not progressing technically.

Your child's practice habits will be assessed in their monthly progress report. As always, feel free to reach out to me or to your child's teacher with questions.

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