

4 Simple Tips for Creating a Practice Binder



Creating a practice binder is a great way to organize your practice routines, and work on any specific skills you want to improve. Here are 4 simple tips to create a practice binder to help you stay focused so you can accomplish your musical goals and stay consistent throughout the school year:

1. Gathering Supplies:

Decide on Container: ex: Physical Binder/Electronic (iPad), etc.

Start by collecting the necessary supplies. You'll need a three-ring binder (with dividers if preferred), loose-leaf paper or notebook, sheet protectors (optional), pens, pencils, and any other materials related to your specific practice, such as sheet music, practice drills, or study guides.

Here are some of my favorite supplies:

Cambridge Binder:

<https://tinyurl.com/nwd5haa8>

Staples 1-inch Binder:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5c6chxf>

Clear sheet protectors:

<https://tinyurl.com/mwhmxs6e>

Avery Plastic Dividers with Pockets:

<https://tinyurl.com/5dwa6hz3>

2. Organizing Sections/Categories

Divide your practice binder into sections based on your clarinet fundamentals goals and the materials you need to accomplish them. Here are some common sections I like to focus on in my practice binder:

- Scales/Arpeggios
- Long Tones
- Finger Work
- Tonguing/Articulation
- Repertoire/Etudes
- Excerpts
- Calendar/Schedule
- Goals

3. Set-up according to Level (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced)

Here are some helpful resources/ideas at each level if you're looking to setup a practice binder:

Beginner Binder | Elementary School

- Scales: <https://tinyurl.com/yshu75bv>
- Fingering chart: <https://tinyurl.com/mtwvskua>
- Simple long tones, tonguing finger work: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxkr92k>
- Calendar of school assignments/concerts: <https://tinyurl.com/4pmc623c>
- Practice chart/sticker chart: <https://tinyurl.com/bdz2anrc>
- Standards of Excellence and or etude book/lesson materials

Intermediate Binder | Middle School/High School

- Intermediate scales and arpeggios, chromatic scale:
pages: 4-6 from: <https://tinyurl.com/29ecrp29>
- Long tones:
Page 1: <https://tinyurl.com/29ecrp29>
- Articulation:
<https://tinyurl.com/4v78v4em>
- Finger work
- etudes/solos
- Goals for the year: regional band, area band, solo and ensemble
Goal setting worksheet: <https://tinyurl.com/4dv689wv>
- Calendar of school assignments/concerts: <https://tinyurl.com/4pmc623c>

Advanced Binder | High School/College

- Advanced scales and arpeggios (Klose, Baermann)
<https://tinyurl.com/4u3tm3ux>
- Long tones
<https://tinyurl.com/ytkk9pe5>

- Articulation

p. 28 <https://tinyurl.com/4u3tm3ux>

Pages 28-33: <https://tinyurl.com/4fw2n98v>

- Fingerwork

Vade Mecum: <https://tinyurl.com/mrx3ycby>

- etudes/solos

- Excerpts (keep the standard 15 excerpts and practice every day)

<https://tinyurl.com/2h8zzbch>

- Goals for the year: auditions, recitals (work backwards from the date and create a practice plan for each performance).

Goal setting worksheet: <https://tinyurl.com/4dv689wv>

Calendar of school assignments/concerts: <https://tinyurl.com/4pmc623c>

4. Implementation (Habit/Practice Tracker)

The key to making your practice binder effective is to use it consistently. Stick to your practice schedule, update your practice logs after each session, and review your goals and progress regularly. Adjust your goals as needed to reflect your evolving skills and aspirations. Here are some helpful trackers:

Habit tracker: <https://tinyurl.com/3vjnbhyp>

Practice tracker: <https://tinyurl.com/shvxfvsc>

Remember that your practice binder is a personal tool, so feel free to customize it to suit your preferences and needs. The more organized and tailored it is to your specific goals, the more useful it will be in helping you make progress and achieve success.