

# ABSOLUTE FLUTE

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## Practice Makes Perfect

Establishing a solid practice routine is essential for mastering any instrument, even the flute. It is important to warm yourself and the flute up and set firm practice goals to be able to get where you want to go.

We talked about effective goal setting last half term, so hopefully you have found this useful in your practice routines. However, goals are only helpful if we know how to achieve them.

Picking up the flute and diving into pieces can be very tempting (sometimes we need that), but doing this too often leads to less focus on key areas and less progress overall. This is the opposite to what we want!

When it comes to pieces, we can also fall into many traps. Playing from the start every day, for example. Or even playing all the way through, forgetting to address any problem areas.

There are a lot of methods you can use to practice pieces effectively, some creative and some more standard. I have made a list of a few different methods to try if you find you are stuck on a particular section of your music.

In this newsletter, I will talk about setting aside time for practice and pitfalls in this area. I will also address some key areas you should look to cover in your routine - these can be adapted to suit any level or any tricky practice areas. I have even included some timed example plans to use!

Also, have a check out of my upcoming concert in Easter on the back page!

*Victoria Heath*

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# Tips, Tricks and Information

## Warming Up

A consistent flute practice routine is essential to good progress on the instrument. With good practice, we can reach perfection! So, you have made some goals, taken your flute out the case, now what...?

**Set up your practice space.** Try to practice in a quiet space, when you have a good amount of time free. Turn off any electronic devices you are not using for your practice so you can practice undisturbed. You will also need to set up a good music stand at either a nice sitting or standing height.

**Warm up your body.** With woodwind instruments, the sound begins from your body, we want to look after this every step of the way. Start with some gentle stretches of the wrists, shoulder rolls and begin to breathe deeply.

**Long notes.** Start with long notes to listen to your tone and breathing. Focus on keeping a consistent sound, stretching it as long as you can and moving slowly up and down the range of your instrument. You may wish to use a tuner here. If you fancy something different, you can also do these with your back against a wall in a 'hovering seat' position to feel your breathing into the back of your ribs. You may also want to experiment with harmonics or octave jumps here to continue your tone work.

**Scales.** Begin moving the fingers now to warm them up. Focus on a key signature of a piece you will be playing later in your practice or a scale you would like to master. You can continue these slowly or begin to speed them up, even adding in articulation (slurred, tongued, staccato, slur 2 tongue 2, double tonguing etc).

**Study.** This is a good time to break out a study. You can use these to practice articulation, fingerings, intervals or even sight reading. Find a study that works on a tricky area so you can make sure you cover this in a warm up. Ask me if you would like some study ideas!

## How to Find Time

Jethro Tull has a 'kitchen flute'. It may seem like an odd idea, but he says that most of his practice is done while waiting for a pot to boil!

Sometimes life is busy or hectic but we can always find time for a couple focussed minutes of practice.

How about practicing... when you are waiting for a sibling to be ready to leave, when dinner is cooking, in a TV ad break or even while the car is de-icing.



## Exam Details

- ABRSM In Person Exam bookings are currently closed. The exams will take place 03 Mar - 05 Apr 2025.
- ABRSM Performance (Online) exams can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.
- Trinity In Person Exam bookings are currently closed. The Exams will take place 17 Mar - 17 Apr 2025
- Trinity Digital can be booked any time and videos submitted within a month.

### SHOUT OUT SPOT!

Good luck to those taking exams this term!



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# Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...

flutetunes.com

## Going to Donnybrook

Traditional Irish

$\text{♩} = 104$



D.S.

## Practice Tips

If you need some tips on how to master that piece, have a look below for some ideas on different ways to practice it!

- **Practice backwards** (not literally) - do you find you always practice from the beginning? Perhaps your end is not so strong? Practice from the last bar and work your way back one bar at a time.
- **Practice backwards** (literally) - learn that tricky bar forwards and backwards!
- **Dotted rhythms** - If your fingers are not moving evenly, play the passage in dotted rhythms (long - short or short - long). You will find 1 method harder and that'll be the one to practice to even it out.
- **Isolation** - take out a variable. Clap the rhythm first, then play the notes one at a time, practice that articulation. Put them together in different combinations.
- **Variety** - Play your tricky passage in different ways; loud, quiet, slurred, staccato, happy, sad. You will become so much more confident.
- **The dreaded metronome** - metronome practice gets a bad reputation but is immeasurably helpful. Practice a few bars at a time if needed, making sure you listen to the click. Start slow and gradually increase the speed.
- **Mental practice** - look at your music, really look at it. Hear it in your head. Think through the fingers. Have a listen to recordings with the score. How well do you know every part of it?
- **Memorise** - Finding a section hard to get? Try playing it one note at a time, then two until you have it memorised.

## Bonus Tip

Sleep!

Seriously. Sometimes a good night's sleep is truly all you need to take your piece to the next level. Don't be afraid to put away your music for the day and revisit it tomorrow.

You'd be surprised how much settles in your brain through a good sleep.

*Sleep... never heard of it, no time for it...*

Even short naps can sometimes help to freshen up your mind.



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# Tips, Tricks and Information Continued...

## Practice Routine Examples

How much should you practice? The age old question. My answer? As much as you can as long as it's focussed!

See below some adaptable practice routines you can use!

### 5 minutes (speed practice, here we go!) -

- 1.5 minutes - **long notes** (focus on big breaths and group into 4s working up or down).
- 1.5 minutes - **scales** (pick a key and play a major/ minor scale and its arpeggio)
- 2 minutes - **piece** (pick a tricky bar from your piece and play it 5x slowly)

### 15 minutes (a good chunk of time for regular practice) -

- 1 minute - gentle **stretches** and deep breathing
- 3 minutes - **long notes**
- 1 minute - practicing octave **jumps**/ other intervals/ harmonics
- 3 minutes - **scales** (pick a key and play both the major and minor scale and arpeggios in this key. Vary the articulation between tongued, slurred and staccato)
- 2 minutes - **sight read** a line from a study/ piece. Play it again and see if you can improve it in some way (set a goal here).
- 5 minutes - your **piece** (pick a tricky bar from your piece and play it 5x slowly, repeat this a few times with different sections. You can use highlight strips and lego to help with this!)

### 30 minutes (a good, standard amount if you can) -

- 2 minutes - gentle **stretches** and deep breathing
- 3 minutes - **long notes**
- 1 minutes - practicing octave **jumps**/ other intervals/ harmonics
- 5 minutes - **scales** (pick a couple keys and play both the major and minor scale and arpeggios in this key. Vary the articulation between tongued, slurred and staccato)
- 5 minutes - **sight read** a line from a study/ piece. Play it again and see if you can improve it in some way (set a goal here).
- 12 minutes - your **piece** (pick a tricky bar from your piece and play it 5x slowly, repeat with another bar or piece)
- 2 mins - play something **fun**, you did a great practice!

## Bonus Tip

You ideally want to cover the following elements in your practice in some way (suggestions below each element) -

### 1. Breathing

- a. Long notes
- b. Slow studies
- c. Breathing away from the flute

### 2. Tone

- a. Long notes
- b. Harmonics
- c. Slow studies

### 3. Jumps/ intervals

- a. Harmonics
- b. Octave jumps
- c. Studies

### 4. Fingers

- a. Scales
- b. Trill practice
- c. Studies

### 5. Articulation

- a. Scales
- b. Studies

Try to practice 4-5x a week if possible for maximum retention.





## Events

### Victoria Heath

#### **SAVE THE DATE!** **The Unseen Flute III**

Saturday 12th April, 2:00pm-3:00pm, The Conservatoire

Are you ready to embark on a musical adventure exploring big flutes, tiny piccolos, wooden flutes from all around the world and even a crystal flute? Join us for part 3 of a unique family concert that will explore the diverse and enchanting sounds the flute can produce. You might just think of the traditional orchestral flute, but prepare to be surprised. From synthesisers to world flutes and even unconventional fusions, this concert will showcase the versatility of the flute in ways you've never imagined! There will even be opportunity for a Q&A and an instrument try-out session for families after the concert!

### Just Flutes

#### **Chris Hankin - Vibrato - The Trickiest Issue?**

Monday, 7 April 2025, 19:00  
<https://www.justflutes.com/events/just-flutes-monday-night-workshops-adult-flute-players-chris-hankin>

#### **Chamber Music Day with Chris Hankin**

Sunday, 8 June 2025, 10:00  
<https://www.justflutes.com/events/?srltid=AfmBOopfKYZVo9qgre-27omS4EdZaL6THlowryU5x5frng38CRp-PI0v#gref>

<----- Link and booking to come soon!

*Thank you for reading!*

## Monthly Music



See below for a few music listening recommendations:

Something classic:

#### **Martinů - First Flute Sonata**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D-1sEEQKtQ>

Something unknown:

#### **Anders Forslund - Intermezzo #2 Solitude**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPBeYegiW-o>

Something a bit different:

#### **Robin Christian - Bansuri, Shradh Bhajans**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVxS0MsU9ak>

### For Sale:

1607 Altus brought in 2016 being rehomed due to an upgrade.

It's in lovely condition and available to trial in London.

Being sold for £2,500

If you are interested, please let me know and I can pass along the seller's details.



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