

Clarinet Students

Learning the clarinet is fun, exciting, and deeply rewarding. With your clarinet, you can create beautiful sounds and songs, and you can share the joy of music by playing in a band, orchestra, or smaller group. Being part of an ensemble is an amazing experience of teamwork, unity, and creativity, but playing on your own as a soloist can be just as fulfilling.

Clarinet Practice

Practice is the key to progress. School, sports, and other activities may keep you busy, but without practice you won't improve or experience the true joy of music. Music is already inside you, and regular practice is the path to bringing it out. As you learn and grow, playing becomes more satisfying and more fun.

I will ask you to practice at least five times a week. The length of your sessions depends on your level and schedule:

- Beginners: 15–20 minutes
- Intermediate and advanced students: 30–60 minutes

I will provide a practice record sheet so you can keep track of what you do. Consistency is more important than cramming everything into one day, so steady progress over time will bring the best results.

Good Practice Habits

- Be patient and slow: Play at a tempo you can manage. If you practice too quickly, you'll develop bad habits. Increase speed gradually as you improve.
- Work in sections: Read the whole piece, then focus on the hardest parts. Break them down into smaller chunks, repeat, correct, and repeat again until your fingers, body, and mind remember what to do.
- Look ahead: Train your eyes to look a few beats ahead in the music so your mind can prepare for what comes next.
- Use tools: More advanced students can use a metronome to develop steady rhythm and a tuner to refine pitch. Refinement is fun—it's a challenge to see how far you can take your skills.

Even professional musicians practice this way. Learning music never stops, no matter how good you become. There is always something new, exciting, and beautiful to discover.

Clarinet Care

- Swab the inside of your clarinet after every practice session.

Cathy McCashin

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- Keep the corks greased for a proper seal.
- Rotate reeds so they last longer.
- Avoid leaving your clarinet in extreme heat or cold.
- Schedule regular checkups with a repair technician (see the Resources page for local music stores).

What to Bring to Lessons

To make sure each lesson goes smoothly, please bring:

- Your clarinet (assembled and in good working order)
- A working reed and a few extras
- A music stand
- Your lesson assignments and any assigned repertoire

Please try to arrive about five minutes early so you have time to set up. That way, once the previous lesson finishes, you are ready to begin right away. It helps you make the most of your lesson time and start off focused and relaxed.

Performance Opportunities

Sharing music is one of the most enjoyable parts of playing an instrument. You can play with your school band, play duets with another instrument, perform in small groups or with friends, or play for family and friends at home.

These experiences help you build confidence, create lasting memories, and remind you how much joy music brings to others.