



Heartland School of Music

5 WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF MUSIC LESSONS

1. START AT THE RIGHT AGE

We recommend the following guidelines:

Piano and Keyboard.....5 years old and up

Guitar/Bass/Mandolin.....6 years old and up

Woodwinds.....9 years old and up

Drums.....8 years old and up

Violin.....5 years old and up

Adults can start lessons at any time! It's never too late. Success for any student is based on how willing one is to commit to practice time at home and attending the weekly lessons. Building a skill takes time. Give yourself 9-12 months to see significant results. Look for a program that will encourage you to learn your favorite songs AND help you understand how music is put together. Believe it or not, understanding the basics goes a long way toward making music success easier.

2. INSIST ON PRIVATE LESSONS

Group lessons work very well for pre-school programs and music theory classes. However, every person learns differently and at a varying pace. Private lessons provide the optimum learning environment by tailoring the lesson to the student's particular learning style. Look for teachers who use creative artistic materials and present musical ideas in a positive and motivating manner. Quality teachers will provide opportunities for performances (recitals, festivals and contests) throughout the year.

3. TAKE LESSONS IN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Learning music is not just a matter of having a qualified teacher and a quality instrument, but also having an environment that is focused on music education. In a professional school environment, a student cannot be distracted by television, pets, phone calls, video games, siblings, etc. A professional environment can produce better results since the only focus at that time is learning music. Students in a school environment are also motivated by hearing peers who are at different levels and by being exposed to a variety of teaching styles. In a music school, the lessons are not a hobby or sideline job for the teacher, but instead a career responsibility which is taken very seriously by the teacher AND the student.

4. LOOK FOR A WELL-ROUNDED PROGRAM

Studies show that students who participate in a weekly group music theory and history class tend to progress faster and continue their music studies for a longer period of time. By attending a group class, in addition to the private lessons, the student learns the basic skills of literate musicianship and they are afforded the opportunity to see that other students are pursuing similar worthwhile goals. These classes reinforce what students are learning at the private lessons as well as provide additional performance opportunities. Understanding how music is put together is essential for anyone wishing to excel on any particular instrument. Learning to read music is like learning a second language. To communicate effectively in any language, one learns not only how to speak, but also how to read and write.



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(5 WAYS CONT.)

5. MAKING PRACTICE EASIER

As with anything, improving in music takes practice. One of the main concerns heard from students and families is that practicing can become repetitive and not very exciting. Fighting between parents and students can also become commonplace if care is not taken to structure the activity. Here are some ways to make practicing more successful and enjoyable:

TIME: Set the same time everyday to practice so it becomes part of a routine habit. Generally, the earlier in the day the practice time can occur, the less reminding is required by parents to get the student to practice. Breaking up the practice time into two 15 minutes sessions (morning and evening) can also be very successful, especially for young students.

REPETITION: Try this method when setting practice schedules for beginners. For some students, 20-30 minutes can seem like an eternity. Instead of setting a time frame, use repetition. For example, "practice this piece 4 times every day, and this scale 5 times a day." The student then doesn't pay attention to the amount of time they are practicing, but knows that if they are on repetition number 3, then they're almost finished.

REWARDS: This works very well for both children and adult students. Parents can encourage children by granting them OCCASIONAL rewards for successful practicing. Some adults might reward themselves with a cappuccino after a successful week of practicing. Some students earn stickers and stars. Also, yearly achievement programs where students earn ribbons, certificates, medals and trophies can be a great incentive. Praise tends to be the most coveted award; there's just no substitute for a pat on the back for job well done.

When seeking an instructor or a music school, ask about their practice-building methods. Learning to use any instrument, including your voice, takes the dedication of more than just the student!

**The most important thing you can do to get the most out of music lessons is:
HAVE FUN!**

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www.heartlandsofmusic.com