



MAUD POWELL'S 10 Practice Rules

Tips to help you get the most out of each
practice session

tonebase Violin



Introduction

Maud Powell (1867 – 1920) is known today as the first American violinist to garner international praise, and one of the foremost female violinists in modern history.

Her prodigious talent appeared as early as the age of 9, taking her from her Peru, IL hometown to Chicago to study piano with Agnes Ingersoll and violin with William Lewis — then to Europe's distinguished conservatories, and performances with the Berlin Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic.

A sharp social commentator, Powell wrote an article called "The American Girl & Her Violin" for The Etude in 1909, in which she plainly defends women's place in the study and performance of art music. In the article, she includes her 10 Practice Rules which are still helping violinists practice more efficiently to this day.

Use these tips and see how much more you'll get out of your practice sessions!



Maud Powell's 10 Practice Rules

01

Concentrate

Concentrate your thoughts on your work, completely and absolutely. One hour of absorbed practice is worth forty of the casual sort.

02

Play In Tune

The worst of all violinistic crimes is to be untrue to pitch.

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03 Practice Scales Religiously

Play them slowly and with perfect evenness, both as to fingering and bowing.

04 Practice Slowly

Practice slowly all difficult or intricate passages; also, jumps, trills, spiccato, staccato, arpeggios, etc.

05 Practice Long Slow Bows

Practice long bows slowly, slowly, slowly. Draw out the tone. Pull it out, spin it, weave it, but never press it out or squeeze the string. By pressing the string with the bow you can check the natural vibration, and without changing the position of the left hand the smallest fraction, you can actually lower the pitch of the note you are producing.

06 Memorize Everything

Memorize everything, including scales, etudes, pieces and difficult passages in chamber music.

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07

The Composition's Structure

Keep in mind the structure of the composition while practicing separate phrases, difficult passages, etc. Do not let your playing or your memory become "patchy" — keep each measure mentally in its place; that is, in its correct relation, structurally, to the whole.

08

"Vorspielen"

"Vorspielen." This German word means "to play before." Play your studies or pieces over in their entirety before any long-suffering friend who will listen. You will be amazed at the sore spots that will reveal themselves, and will make it your business to heal them as quickly as possible.

09

Hear Other Violinists

Hear other violinists. You will listen in spite of yourself. Then apply that kind of listening to your own work. There will be more surprises in store for you.

10

Love Your Instrument

Love your instrument as yourself. But love your art more than either. Keep the fires of enthusiasm burning. Nothing was ever accomplished without faith and enthusiasm.

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