

The suggestions below are a good starting place as you embark on practicing and performing on the trombone. Staying motivated is closely related to your feelings, not only as a player but also as a person. These are some brief ideas to help you get started. You can add your own ideas in the space provided. This will personalize your program so that it will be more likely useful to you. You are welcome to use, change, or disregard any of these suggestions. Have fun and go for it!

If you come up with ideas that you think others could use or enjoy, visit the OTJ Forum and leave your suggestions in the “Just for Beginners” forum. Look for the “Staying Motivated” topic. We’ll see you there!

Why Do I Want to Play the Trombone?

All musicians need to regularly remember why they play and perform. Some forget often, while others rarely forget. Keep this sheet nearby so that you can use it to remind yourself the reasons why you love to play the trombone.

These should be your own personal reasons – not anybody else’s. You will be more likely to continue playing the trombone if you have an inner love of the instrument and its music. Write your thoughts here.

Find Music You Enjoy Playing

It is important to play etudes and exercises from books that stretch you. However, do not forget to play music that gives you pleasure as well. It could be music from the movies, top 40, classical favorites, jazz, or any other genre. Include music that you like to play in your daily practice session. After all, that is what music is all about: having fun!

Use this space to write down some examples of music that you would simply enjoy playing.

Set Up Your Practice Area

Creating an environment that is conducive to practicing is an important first step. Make sure you are comfortable, and there are no distractions. Make your practice area a place that you can concentrate on making music. Practice time works best when you are able to focus only on practicing.

Use this space to write down ideas of how to ensure that your practice area and practice time are protected from distractions.

Play With Others

Playing with large ensembles, chamber music, bands, trios, or duets can be extremely rewarding. If you are encouraging and supportive of their playing, they will often treat you with the same enthusiasm and respect. Make sure the music you play together is fun and challenging. It is a great feeling when you are able to play a piece you thought you could not.

Put down some ideas here of other instruments or individuals you might enjoy playing with. Another trombonist, a trumpeter, a classical pianist, a jazz singer: the possibilities are endless!

Set Goals

Setting goals regularly will give your musical life purpose and forward momentum. You can always change a goal you have set, but you cannot meet any goal you have not set. As the old saying goes, "better to have failed than never to have tried."

What goals do you have for this week? For this month? For next five years?

Listening

There is no better way to get motivated than listening to live music or recordings that inspire you. Make a trip to hear the trombone played by an experienced musician. Buy recordings of trombonist playing music in all styles. If you do not like the music they play today, you may tomorrow. By stretching your ears, you will find a greater love of what you are doing, and get ideas about goals for your own playing.

What trombonists or kinds of trombone music would you like to listen to?

Perform for Friends and Family

Invite your friends and family to hear you play at recitals, concerts, and informal occasions. What a great motivation, when you receive accolades for all the practicing you have done. Include music that sets your soul free. Play music either alone and/or with others, have fun! Whom would you like to invite to hear you play? At what kinds of performances?

Use Your Imagination

Using your imagination is fun and easy. It allows you to create and change your music making. Your imagination has no boundaries (except the ones you set). Imagine your sound projecting in a beautiful concert hall, or imagine a drummer is playing along with you during a difficult etude (this will help your rhythm.)

How else can you use your imagination while playing?

Take Private Lessons

Learning from an experienced trombonist will often motivate you to practice. Find a teacher that works well for you. What are your next steps in ensuring you have a private teacher that works well for you?

Encouragement

Give yourself plenty of encouragement. Pat yourself on the back after you do something well. Every day, remind yourself that what you are doing is creative and fun.

Mistakes are part of the learning process. Use those mistakes to become better. You are completely capable of becoming an outstanding trombonist.

What would you like to say to yourself on a daily basis?
