

DON'T SKIP THIS

Maybe there are people in the world who really, really love to practice piano, but I haven't met any of them.

None that would admit it, anyway.

Even those of us who have made playing the piano our life's work (aka professionals) mostly tolerate practicing **because we know that's how you get the prize.**

What's the prize?

Playing the songs and pieces that we love, of course!

We get to experience the satisfaction of creating beautiful music with our own two hands. We get applause. We get to have a transcendental experience. Sometimes, playing the piano even helps us get dates with attractive people!

But what if you find that no matter how much you practice, you never get the prize?

What if you spend hours of your life, dutifully repeating the music you want to learn, making the same mistakes over and over again, and just never feel like you've "arrived"?

That can be super frustrating, and, in my experience, it's the number one reason that adult pianists give up playing.

It's hard to find accurate data on "drop out" rates of adults learning piano, but it's pretty commonly accepted that **many don't make it past the 2 year mark.**

Imagine - finally taking action on that yearning to play music, getting an instrument, buying books and courses, watching hours of tutorials, maybe even investing in lessons with a piano teacher - only to let it all go because you just don't feel like you're making progress.

The disappointment and regret can be heartbreaking.

Disappointment because you conclude that you just don't have what it takes (we often call this "talent"), and regret that you didn't start (or continue) when you were younger.

I'm here to tell you that it doesn't have to be this way.

Why should you believe me?

Well, I've been a professional musician most of my life. And for a majority of that time, I've been on a quest to optimize my practice method so that I get the results I want in the quickest and most direct way. I've experimented, researched, learned, and yes, I made mistakes, big and small.

In fact, during one especially difficult period of my life, I developed a crippling and extremely painful case of tendinitis. I was in college and had been practicing 6-8 hours a day for weeks. And even though my technique was pretty good, my method of practicing left a lot to be desired.

I was a trooper, though. I pushed myself to keep going. I kept a stiff upper lip. I played through the pain...

Until I couldn't play anymore.

My shoulders, elbows, and hands just stopped working.

I was told by a doctor to find a different line of work because the overuse injuries I had developed would return if I continued to play.

That doctor was very sure that I'd never be able to fully heal.

He was wrong.

Not only did I heal, I discovered and developed new and highly effective ways of practicing and playing the instrument that I love. I realized I could accomplish a lot more in a fraction of the time.

Over the years, as I streamlined and perfected my practice methods, I started sharing them with my students. The results they achieved with my system were spectacular (and often surprising to themselves).

How is all this possible? It's simple, really.

When you know exactly what and how to practice, you use your time and attention with the precision of a surgeon's scalpel. And you become a learning machine.

Over the last couple of decades, I've shared my knowledge with thousands of students. Now, for the first time, I'm taking you with me into the practice room and giving you the full view of the step-by-step methods that I and my students use to get the best results from our piano practice time.

Follow the concepts in this book, and you, too, will find yourself delighted by how quickly you are able to achieve your piano goals.

Before we get started, I want to make a quick note about the title of this book:

PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT

I chose this title because I want to be clear about busting a huge myth that I hear repeated over and over, and that myth is:

“practice makes perfect”

WRONG

This phrase, in my opinion, is responsible for an awful lot of frustration, and it causes people to waste the only resource we can never get more of - **our time.**

Well-meaning friends, family, and even many teachers encourage you to keep going, keep repeating, keep doing more of what's not working.

“Just keep practicing! You’ll get it!”

NO

Putting in the time and not seeing the results inevitably leads to burnout. You may have already experienced this for yourself.

The reality is that **practicing doesn't guarantee improvement.**

It's the quality of practice that makes the difference.

Let me ask you a question.

When you practice the wrong things in the wrong ways, when will you arrive at “perfect”?

I'll go even further and say that the aim for “perfection” is misguided. There's no such thing as perfection in the arts.

So, the entire foundation of “practice makes perfect” is flawed.

Here's what's true.

Whatever you practice over and over, that's what becomes ingrained in you - making it “permanent.”

That's not, like, my opinion, man. It's science!

Imagine flipping through the pages of a magazine and seeing a picture of a steak on a plate. How quickly would you recognize what it was? Maybe in a fraction of a second? And almost immediately, you'd remember the scent and taste of a steak. Your mouth might even start to water and, before long, you'd be making plans for a steak dinner.

But why? How is it that seeing some colored ink on paper can cause all of these mental and physical reactions?

Well, **our nervous system functions through electrical impulses**. These impulses (or bits of information) travel through a network of tiny wires. We call these wires *nerve cell axons*.

This network of wires sends information from one cell to another. It's kind of like a very sophisticated version of that old game called "Telephone."

The nerve cells are surrounded by a fatty substance called **myelin**. Myelin is the real hero of this story, because its job is to protect and insulate nerves, helping them to quickly conduct impulses between the brain and the different parts of the body.

Now, here's the cool part.

Every time you repeat an action, like seeing, smelling, and tasting a steak, the myelin wrapped around those particular nerve pathways actually gets thicker - making the information move through those pathways faster and more smoothly over time!

Neurons that fire together, wire together.

In 1949, psychologist Donald Hebb laid out his "assembly theory," stating that neurons that respond to the same stimulus connect to each other to form "neuron ensembles."

In other words, each time a certain action or thought is repeated, the connection between those neurons gets stronger, and they work better together as a team.



That's how you're able to almost instantly recognize the picture of the steak, and how you can recall what a steak smells and tastes like.

It's also how you learn to do anything. Like, playing the piano.

So basically, every time you play or practice, you're building and strengthening teams of neurons. Build teams that get you the results you want, and you'll save yourself lots of time in the long run.

And that's why it's important to practice correctly.