

What Motivates You to Practice?

1. Without a target you are just shooting arrows into the air! Before long you will get bored and quit. Write out and review weekly why you want to drum. We get caught up in the “stuff” of life and so without reminding yourself why you started drumming, you’ll get sidetracked and lose your investment in yourself. Keep stoking the coals to keep your fire hot! What you regularly feed your eyes feeds your heart. See where you are going!
2. Regularly read drum magazines, watch music DVDs, and go to live performances. There is so much going on in the Tucson weekly! Feed the flames of your passion for music. Seeing often is believing!
3. Don’t stress if you can’t always sit at a drum set. Drumming is 90% in the head. Building rhythm and coordination can be done anywhere and anytime. I grew up tapping on the dashboard, school desk, my legs, boxes, buckets, and pillows! I make music now almost everywhere I go. Every time I listen to the car radio, I’m pretending to be that drummer on my steering wheel! Be creative! I have a practice pad and stool in my bathroom and in front of my TV. Otherwise, that is wasted time in my opinion!
4. The point of all music learning is to make music. Turn everything you practice into music that is enjoyable to you. Hum a song while you are practicing. Pretend you are in a band. I’ve been teaching you to use your right-brain to learn faster by singing the parts.
5. Without playing in bands (33 to date) I would have quit a long time ago. It all started by jamming with just one person. That’s when my lessons started to make sense! It’s so easy to meet people on Craigslist, from the music store bulletin boards, at local jam sessions, at church, and wherever bands play. It’s a blast! Make new friends!

Practice Tips:

1. Try to do a little something every day, even if it’s for 5 minutes! The body craves regularity – create a tradition and a routine! 21 days in a row and you will have a habit that is hard to break. The muscles of drumming require daily exercise to build their coordination and speed. It’s not just head knowledge you can stuff in right before you come to your lesson. It’s like every sport – you’ll only get good if you do a little something every day – or at most every other day. Become a drum addict! It’s got to pay off more than TV and video games!
2. Figure out ahead of time when during each day you can get a little time in that is safest from distractions. Turn your phone off! Make that appointment with yourself and keep your word to yourself. We are all slaves to habits. The key is to choose which ones.
3. Do a little bit on each exercise I give you on your practice log. Don’t get bogged down too long on any one exercise. You’ll get overlapping skills from other exercises I gave you, so when you go back to the difficult ones, they will be easier. Trust me.
4. Come up with a method for learning. Use some of my ideas. Follow your process, step by step. Refine it along the way. Find the shortcuts. Don’t reinvent the wheel! Model excellence.
5. Keep a good posture – slumping will hurt your back and tire you out. Relax your shoulders and keep your drums as low and close to you as possible. You’ll play longer with less injury. Also faster!
6. Don’t just stare blankly at your music. Use your left-brain by counting it. Use your right-brain by singing it. Close your eyes and see the music in your mind. Repeat until you can play from seeing it there instead of from the page. You’re developing photographic memory that you can use on other things as well. Listen to the beat and memorize the sound pattern – singing it helps. Now you’ve got phonographic memory! Exaggerate your voice and memory – it helps the brain learn quicker.