

Developing skills

You can practice a piece or a particular skill by using visualization techniques. This is not only useful if you want to avoid too much muscular strain or if you are not able to practice (e.g. if you are on a train), but can give you some new insights into your habits and way of playing.

Example

Choose a piece or fragment or exercise you want to work on.

Sit comfortably on a chair and take a few moments to relax and let go of any worries and thoughts.

Imagine yourself picking up your instrument. Feel the instrument – its texture, temperature, weight (if you have to hold it), and begin to play.

Notice the sound you are making – you are making your ideal sound; notice how that feels. Play a few notes (or chords) and enjoy the sensation of producing sound. Feel the resonance grow and hear the richness of the overtones.

Start to play the piece you have chosen. Hear it clearly in your mind with every nuance. Feel how easily you can play. When you come to an unclear fragment, allow yourself to linger over it, feeling and hearing every detail in its ideal form.

You are in total control and can produce ideal music.

As you play, imagine that you are standing some meters away looking at and listening to yourself. Take some moments to observe yourself and your playing from this perspective.

Now allow yourself to be once again in your body as you continue to play.

Continue to play for around five minutes.

After the exercise:

What did you notice about yourself and your sound, the music and your feeling (both physical and emotional) whilst playing?

How was it when you were inside your body, and when you imagined looking from a distance?