

# Creative Ways to Practice

1. **Slow** – we all know that practicing slow and steady is a good place to start.
2. **All Staccato/All Legato** – can you play the entire excerpt using only staccato or only legato articulations? Make sure the rhythm stays accurate. Try other articulation varieties!
3. **Loops** – take one chunk of notes and just loop it over and over, making sure it is correct or improving each time.
4. **Doubles** – For every note you see, play it twice. So if you see an Ab Eighth note, you will now put 2 Ab Sixteenth notes in that space.
5. **Swing/“Unswing”** – straight eighths become relaxed and swung or for “Unswing” make them crushed down, but still with a constant downbeat.
6. **Move the Downbeat** – using a metronome, begin playing the excerpt on the “wrong” downbeat. Can you stay steady or are you relying on the metronome too much?
7. **Every-other Note** – Just play every-other note, leave the space and sing the part in your head, but only play every-other note. Then go back and only play the notes you just left out.
8. **Accent Patterns** – if you have a steady pattern, like straight eighth notes, put a constant accent pattern over them.
9. **Transpose** – Play it in a different key!
10. **Reverse Dynamics** – Play your softs loudly and your louds softly...
11. **MAKE UP YOUR OWN!!!** – Always be thinking of new ways that you can work on the things that are specific challenges for you. Be careful not to encourage bad habits, but be willing to try something new every time you practice.