

Actionable Practice Points

The two core pillars of practice are ease and clarity.

- Are you nailing it 100%? What thing exactly are you changing? (clarity)
- Is it easy/effortless/consistent/automatic to do that thing (ease) - make everything a C major scale and it will be consistent and reliable.

Professionals greatest skill and achievement is their practicing and process. It's not usually physical or knowledge-based. Practice your practicing, improve your process. The way you play is merely a result.

Be a scientist - what you get in performance indicates how you are practicing. Adjust that.

Embrace a long term process: want good technique? Make progress every day for 3 months.

Practice mostly really slow to maximize clarity and ease, but from *day one* test things at full speed to simulate the real context. Maybe really small chunks, maybe only one note at first.

Don't go so far back, don't play it at the same speed, don't go on. *Change* the music to ensure you nail whatever you are working on and to maximize ease and clarity - tempo, notes, rhythm, flow, length, volume, etc.

Invent a new customized etude for yourself every second you practice.

Find resonance (space and ease) in everything, instrument, reed, air of course; but also body, mind, arms, fingers, wrist, eyes, etc.

Train your body and playing not knowledge, approach it like an athlete stretching, build indescribable "athleticism"

Use a little bit of thinking, but quickly dial it down with each repetition so you are just doing.

Have an active mindset, you have to make it something. Make it open, easy, flowing, etc. Never "see if that fixed it for you." It won't be automatic for a while. Make it so easy so you can actively do it full speed.

Be immensely patient, mature, and humble. If you lose clarity or easy because you went too fast, you are being impatient and spoiled, you think you deserve to get it before you do.

Take a no etude week, give yourself space to really change. Just hold notes, listen, and don't play a single note the old way.

Find a "musical" solution - i.e. one that is not telling your body what to do, one that is based in the sound. One that is intentionally abstract and all encompassing. "Smoother, more flowing, more dolce" vs "move my tongue .5 mm up for that note, then .75 mm to the right for..."

Don't practice more than 4 hours a day, but practice all day. Make it your life.

Summary

1. Identify change (100% clear)
2. Make it _____ (more open, more easy, etc.)
3. Repeat actively making the change, each time better (easier, clearer)