

# How to

# Practice:

# Frameworks from Athletic Training

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# Session Overview

## **Musical performance is an athletic pursuit.**

In many disciplines, high performing athletes train intentionally, for specific events and centering approaches that prioritize safety and injury-prevention.

This session will present distinct models of skill development in athletic coaching, including discipline-specific event preparation, periodized season designs, goal cycling, and adaptive training. We will explore the applications of speed, strength, and endurance training in musical practice.

**Participants will leave with sample practice sessions and semester plans for students targeting honor ensemble auditions, college admissions processes, recitals, and general technical and fundamental improvement.**



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# Background



## PERSONAL TRAINING HISTORY

This study originated in the late 20-teens, combining my personal histories of musical and athletic training and noticing the relative lack of specificity in \*types\* of practice sessions needed for musical improvement.

### *Musical training:*

- *Doctor of Music, Bassoon Performance and Literature with minor field certificate, in Music Education*
- *10 years collegiate teaching experience, applied music and ensemble direction*
- *5 years secondary (grades 6-12) teaching experience, band and orchestra*

### *Athletic training:*

- *Long course triathlon*
- *Half marathon*
- *Marathon (in progress!)*



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# Music and Athletics

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## ■ PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Both music performance and athletic training place requirements on the body.

Requirements: endurance, strength, speed, coordination

Risks: chronic injuries, acute injuries, fatigue disorders

## ■ LONG TERM PLANNING

Musical and athletic goals can be focused on the next rehearsal or next practice session but are usually longer term.

Music: concert, audition, degree

Athletic: meet, game, season

## ■ EVENT SPECIFIC SKILLS

In addition to general strength, speed, and coordination, individual events require specifically-crafted skills.

Music: double tonguing, taper to niente, etc.

Athletic: hurdle form, race pace, etc.

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Hard work beats talent when  
talent doesn't work hard.

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Tim Notke, Bay City Western HS basketball coach



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# Training Goals

Setting training goals is critical to building a structure that works for you.

Try a “SMART” goal approach to check on the format of your goals:

## SPECIFIC

I will increase my comfort with memorized scale patterns by

## MEASURABLE

performing all 12 major scales, full range, at 100bpm from memory

## ATTAINABLE

when I can currently play all 12 reading from sheet music.

## RELEVANT

This will prepare me for the next All State auditions

## TIME-BOUND

if I can do this by the end of this school year.



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# Session Types

	<b>Cross Train</b>  to train complementary skills, muscles, or systems	<b>Active Recovery</b>  to stretch or shake out used muscles and reduce injury	<b>Rest</b>
<b>Speed / Power</b>  to increase coordination, strength of particular muscle groups, or specific skills necessary for a given situation	<b>Endurance</b>  to reduce time to exhaustion or simulate a performance situation		



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■ **SPEED / POWER**

■ 5-6 per week

Long tones

Multiple tonguing drills

Vibrato exercises

Metronome work (long/slow “runs” + short/fast “sprints”)

Targeted scales / etudes

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■ **ENDURANCE**

■ 3-4 per week

Collaborative rehearsals

Full runs with metronome, recording, etc.

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■ **CROSS TRAIN**

■ 1-2 per week

Sight-reading

Improv

Score study

Reference listening

Contextual research

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■ **ACTIVE RECOVERY**

■ 1-2 per week

Fun run

Jam session

Arrangement / transcription / composition

Discovery listening

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# Additional Activities



## ■ PREHAB / REHAB

■ incorporated daily

Stretching

Breathwork

Reed making

## ■ RACE SPECIFIC

■ as needed

Dress rehearsal

Run-through

Mock audition



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# Additional Parallels

## **Mantra:**

a positive phrase or affirmation that can help you stay focused on your goals

- “Why not me?”
- “Progress, not perfect.”
- “One step forward.”

## **Group :**

collection of people with common goals or identities

- Practice Club
- Studio
- Audition Circuit

## **Coaching:**

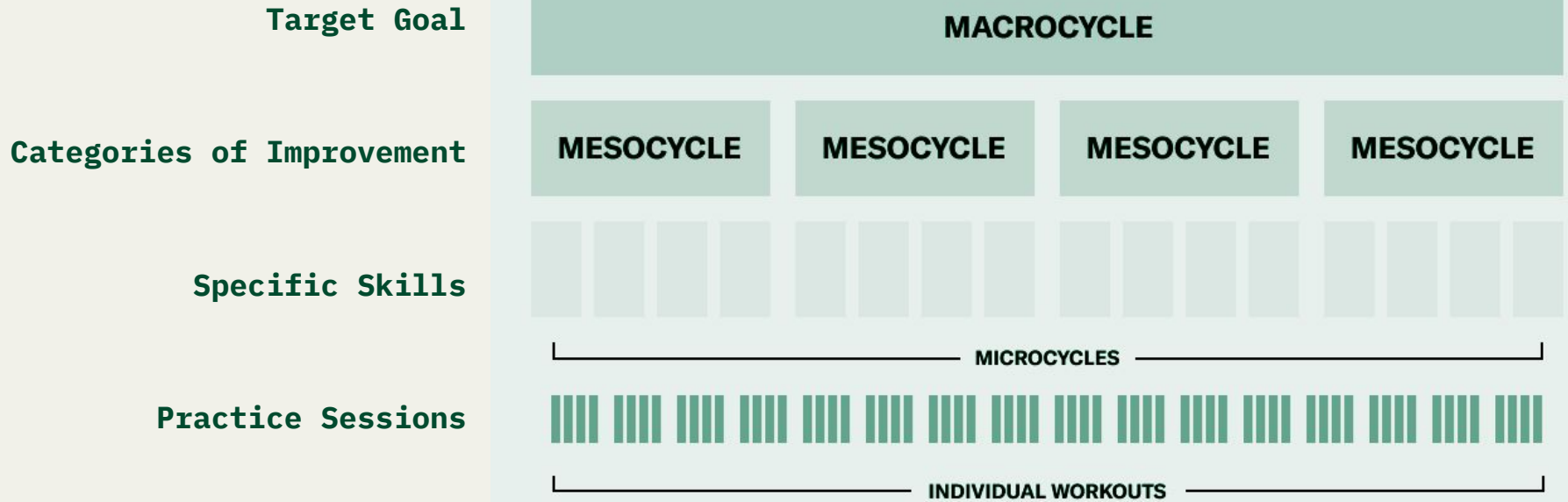
an expert in the field, working specifically with you or a small group

- Provide technical guidance
- Help design a long term practice or training program
- Create healthy performance opportunities



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# Periodized Training



# Macrocycles

## All State Audition

### **May through November**

Lyrical Etude  
Technical Etude  
Major Scale  
Minor Scale  
Chromatic Scale

## College Audition

### **September through February**

Lyrical Solo  
Technical Solo  
Etude Selection  
Orchestral Excerpt(s)  
Major Scales  
Minor Scales  
Sight Reading Skills

## Spring Recital

### **January through April**

Solo Repertoire



# Mesocycles

**Base Training**

Tone

Intonation

**Build Period**

Range

Fluency

**Specialization**

Extended Techniques

Extreme Registers

**Performance**

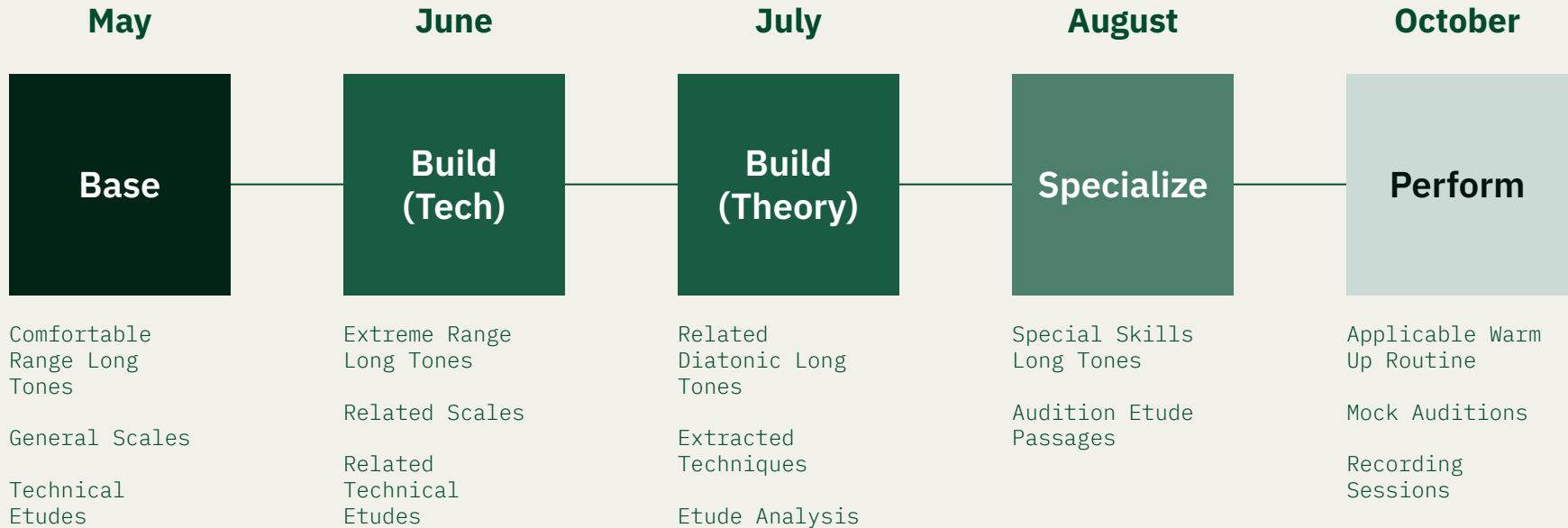
Mock Performance

Performance Psychology



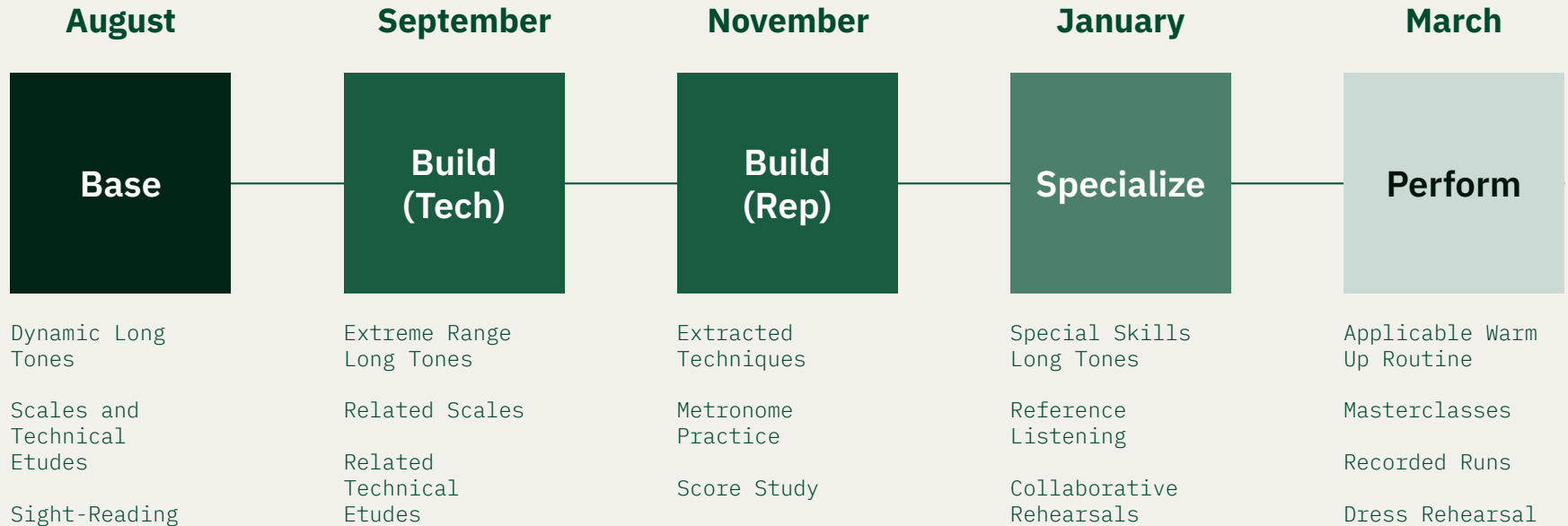
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# Sample Macrocycle: Audition



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# Sample Macrocycle: Recital



# Sample Session:

*60 minutes, Base (Speed/Power)*

15 min

**Fundamentals:**

Slow pentascales  
(key of the week)  
Metered vibrato  
Cresc-decresc for pitch

5 min

**Sight Reading:**  
Rotating style periods

5 min break

25 min

**Technique:**

Extreme register scales  
Diatonic etude  
(with metronome)



# Sample Session:

*90 minutes, Rep Build (Endurance)*

20 min

**Fundamentals:**

Octave leaps with drone  
Slow Remington for pitch  
Double tongue for speed

5 min break

30 min

**Technique (in key):**

Major scale, full range  
Relative minor scale  
Modulating etude

5 min break

30 min

**Repertoire:**

Full recorded run  
Evaluation/part marking



# Sample Session:

*45 minutes, Specialize (Active Recovery)*

10 min

**“Fun Run”:**

Repertoire run with a twist (new tempo, fingering, etc.)

10 min

**Exploration Listening:**

New interpretation of a work you are preparing

5 min break

20 min

**Transcription:**

Notate or play embellishments from new recording



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# Reflection

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## ■ SIMILARITIES

What do you notice is similar to what you already do (or are advised to do)?

Does this framework change your perspective on practicing?



## ■ DIFFERENCES

What is new about this framework for practicing?

Which elements seem most useful to you?



## ■ TAKEAWAYS

Progressive overload involves gradually increasing the intensity or difficulty of workouts and practice sessions over time.

The goal of progressive overload is to maximize results through regular challenges.

Strategic stress maximizes gains while minimizes the possibility of injury and burnout.



# Questions?



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