

# How to Prepare a Great Audition

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So, what's the secret to a great audition?



People *think* it's *one thing*:



**Practice.**

**But,** there's *so much more* to audition prep than  
practice alone!

# A great audition has three parts:

**1. Plan:**  
**Organizing your  
time and  
schedule**

Failing to **plan** is  
planning to fail. . .

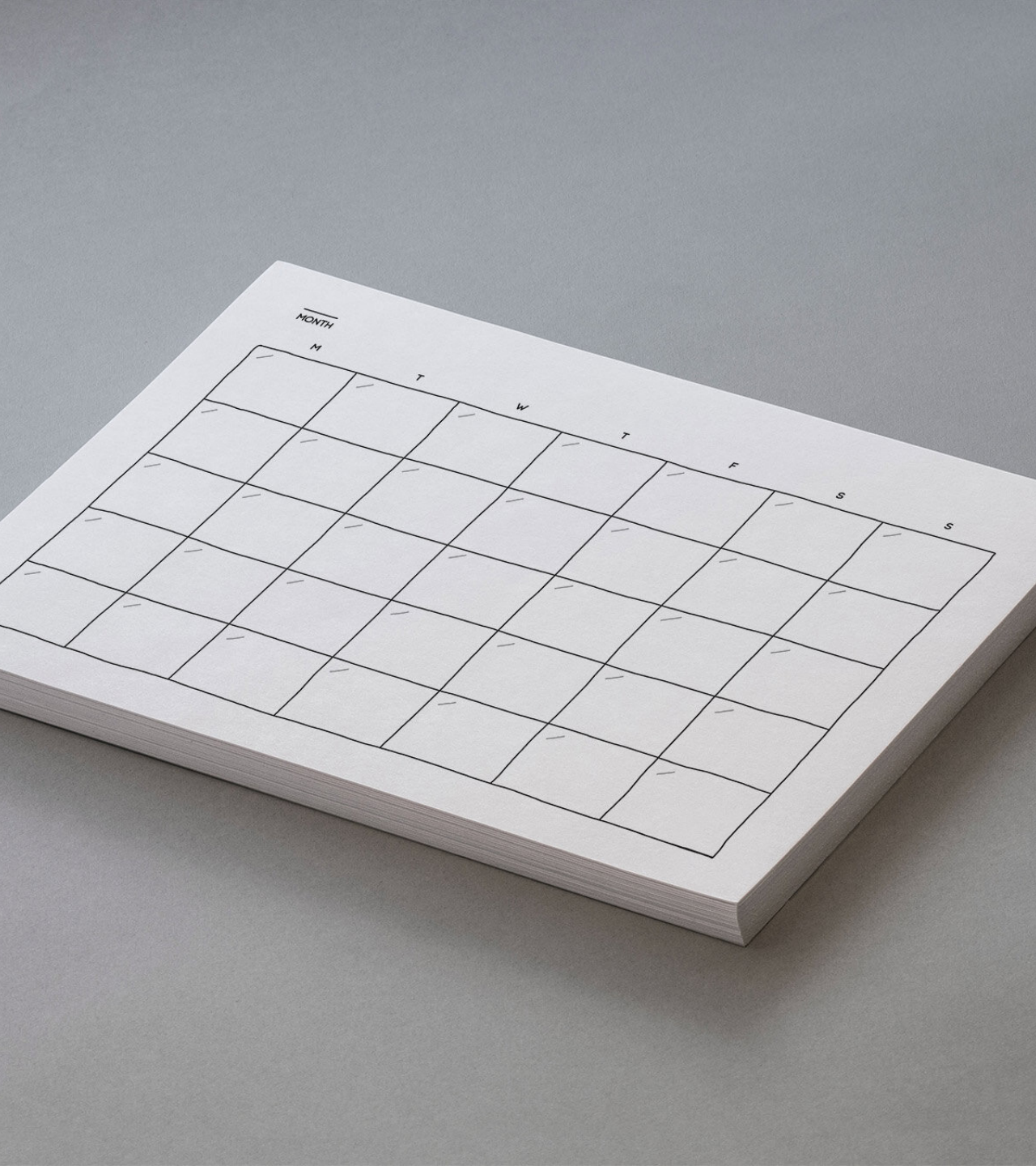
**2. Prepare:**  
**Preparing the  
music**

**HOW** you practice  
matters!

**3. Execute:**  
**Doing your best  
during the  
audition**

Setting yourself up for  
**success** and keeping  
nerves at bay.





# 1. Planning – your schedule

## Big Picture Scheduling

Count back from the audition day and create mini deadlines for yourself

## Weekly schedule

When and where will you practice. We schedule what's important to us. You must schedule practice just like you schedule other activities.

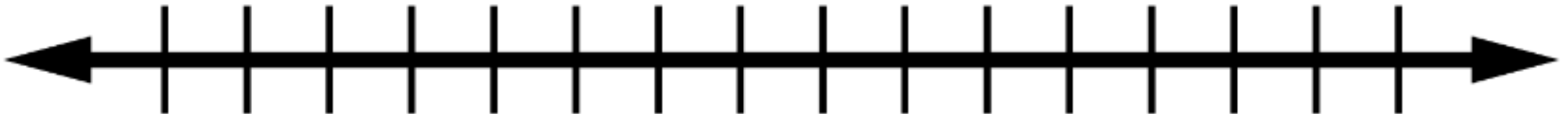
## Know yourself

If you're a morning person, get up early and practice first thing in the day. Efficient and focused practice is better than double the amount of time practicing mindlessly.

# 1. Planning – “big picture” scheduling

This is meant as an ideal framework—be flexible to adjust as necessary!

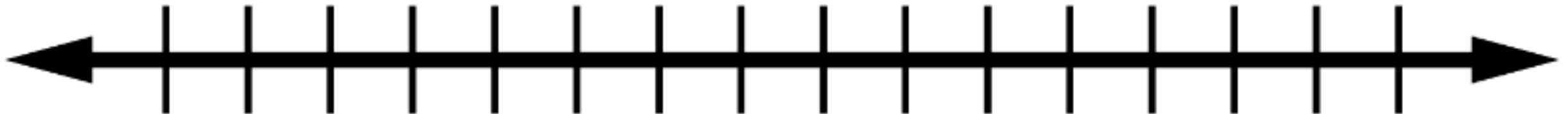
- **12–16 weeks before** : Decide repertoire (do you have freedom to pick anything or are there specific requirements?), listen to recordings, read through music and identify “danger spots” (and write them down) that will require extra practice, decide on initial fingerings/bowings/stickings
- **11–9 weeks before**: Practice, practice, practice! Focus on the notes and rhythm while being mindful of playing musically. Discipline yourself to learn the music correctly to avoid bad habits to break later one. Practice as many ways as possible: slow, fast, metronome, varied rhythms. Not sure how to best practice? Seek help—you want to use your time efficiently!
- **8 weeks before**: The notes and rhythms should be learned well
- **5–7 weeks before**: Music should be at performance tempo (*your* ideal performance tempo) and if memorizing, this is the time to make sure memory work is advancing
- **4 weeks before**: The music should feel solid and performance ready. All music should be memorized (if planning to perform from memory). After this time, time should be spent fine-tuning music, NOT learning notes/rhythms
- **3 weeks before**: Perform for as many people and in as many scenarios as possible. Set-up mock audition environments. Record yourself and *actually listen back* to the recordings!
- **2 weeks before**: Maintain your repertoire—make sure all pieces/excerpts stay at performance level. Continue performing through music (maintain and practice performance stamina). Do mental visualization of yourself performing through all music successfully (this is especially helpful if you are feeling any fatigue from intense practice).
- **Week before** :Taper off your practice and incorporate rest and replenishment. Perform through repertoire and do touch-up work, but do not overdo it!



# 1. Planning – week/day-to-day schedule

Plan EVERYTHING in. We do what we schedule.

- Get a planner (or download a free template (<https://www.calendarpedia.com/>) (I like “weekly” planners)  
Write in everything that’s already in your schedule (school, drama club, piano lesson, family dinner, etc.)
- Now, look at your schedule and plan in your practice
- Once practice is scheduled, plan in some fun/replenishing activities (walk, movie, dinner with friends, video games, etc.) —rewards and play are good!
- Stick to it!



# 1. Planning – Get Yourself Organized

*What do you need to make your practice successful?*

## **Organize your music**

Have everything in a folder/binder. No loose pages – tape all pages together

## **Have all your accessories**

Metronome, pencil, rosin, valve oil, tuner, reeds, recording device, notebook

## **Don't be hungry/thirsty**

Try not to organize practice when you're hungry/thirsty. Carry snacks and water

## **Non-distracting space**

Schedule your practice for a space that allows you to concentrate and not be distracted (and communicate to others to not disturb you!)







## 2. Prepare — learning your music: initial steps

### Identify


Go through the music and identify the most challenging spots that will need the most attention.

### Trust the process

Practice consistently and trust the process of growth and improvement

### Listen and make a playlist

Make a playlist and listen to your repertoire. Use as a model to get to know the music. Be mindful of making the music your own, though --- no need to imitate everything!



**DETERMINATION  
DISCIPLINE  
PERSEVERANCE**

## **2. Prepare** — learning your music: hunkering down!

### **Diversify**

Practice difficult passages as many ways as you can: slow, fast, isolated, in context, dotted rhythms. The more ways your practice, the easier the original becomes.

### **The metronome is your friend**

Make liberal use of the metronome, even on passages you don't think need it! It helps maintain focus and discipline.

### **Keep an objective and non-judgmental disposition**

Respond to mistakes with “how interesting!” instead of “I’m bad.”



## 2. Prepare — when you're getting close!

### Play for others (ANYONE!)

You can't expect to give a good performance if you haven't practiced performing. You must run through your repertoire in front of others!

### Record yourself

Record yourself and listen back—you'll be surprised! You'll be surprised how much went better than you thought, too. The voice memo app on your phone works great.

### Seek feedback

Ask others for feedback . Ask people who you trust. Take in the feedback and don't take it personally.



## 3. Execute – Presenting your best

### Dress the part

Dress like you're a professional who is about to give an awesome performance. Sweats, jeans, sneakers don't present best. Temperatures vary—layers are great!

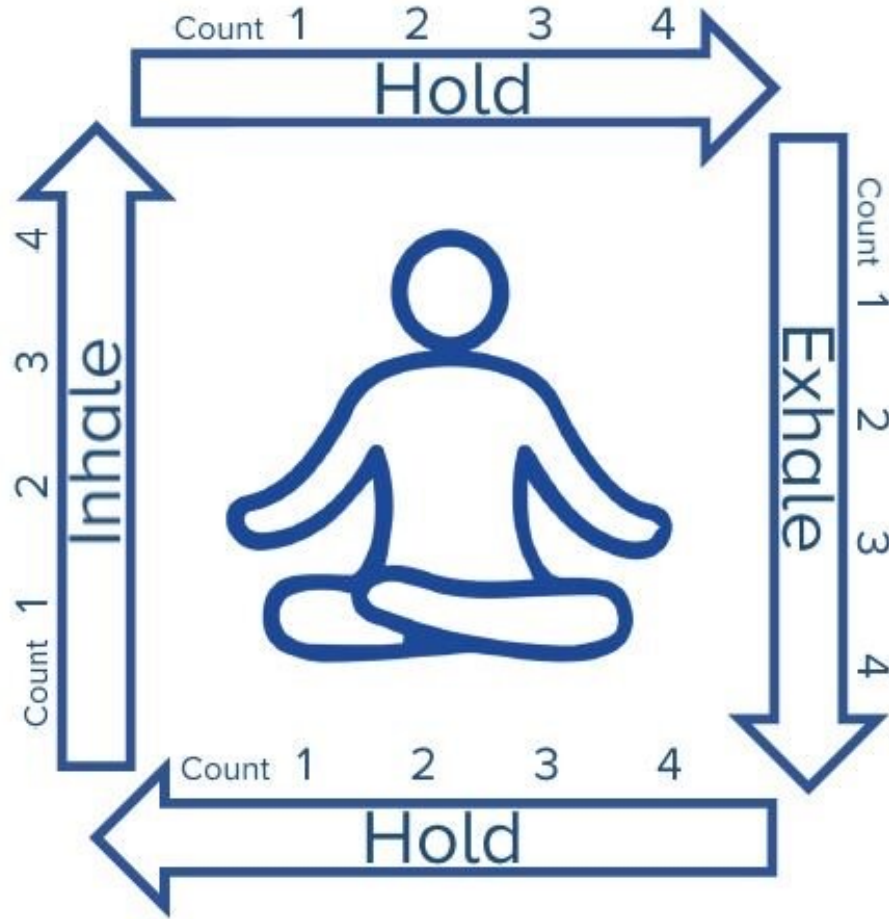
### Carry yourself with confidence

Be mindful of your posture and body language. Even if you don't *feel* confident, stand-up straight and act as if you are comfortable and confident (you'll be surprised how much better you'll start feeling!)

### Plan EXTRA time

Arrive early. Plan that there will be traffic. Allow time to warm-up, use the restroom, etc. Whatever time you think you need, add 15–30 minutes.





## 3. Execute — right before you play

### Breathe

Breathe from your diaphragm. Try basic square breathing

### Get in the zone

This is not the time to scroll Instagram. Focus your mind---try some mantra and/or positive self talk. Reminder yourself that you've been preparing and are ready!

### Enjoy the experience

You've worked really hard. Try to enjoy the waiting and what's to come. At the very least, it's a learning opportunity!



## 3. Execute — the audition performance

### Get comfortable

Make sure your stand, chair, and anything you need is right where you want it. Don't play uncomfortably! Take a deep breath and center yourself before starting.

### Tempos matter

You'll feel nervous---that's normal (and that's also excitement). Sing through your music in your head and choose a tempo a few click under. You can always speed up, but it's more difficult to slow down.

### Let the mistakes go!

You'll make mistakes! Mistakes are forgivable! Playing boring, without passion isn't!





## 3. Execute — after the audition

### Be proud, be humble, be grateful

No matter how you played, hold your head high and be proud of yourself. Be kind to everyone you meet. Thank the committee and any workers/volunteers you encounter.

### Celebrate

Mark the occasion and do something to celebrate. Ice cream, dinner, etc.!

### Reflect

What were the highs and lows? Do this objectively as if you were an observer.



# Final Takeaways

- Auditions are hard, but that's normal, and you can do it!
- The more your audition/perform, the better you will get at preparing and executing
- Don't miss an opportunity to grow—"good" auditions and "bad" auditions are both equally helpful to growth!



Thank you

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