

7 Tools for Technique

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The 7 Tools

Foundational Tools

1. Say and Finger (S/F)
2. 1 Note Per Click (1N/C)
3. I Am Go-Ing Home (IAGH)
4. Note Grouping (NG)

Supplemental Tools

- Skeleton (SK)
- Anchor Note (AN)
- Identify the Theory (TH)

Tool #1: Say and Finger (SF)

Benefits:

- Develops connection between brain and fingers by taking out sound and flexibility.
- Great for accidentals, challenging key signatures, new fingerings or less common fingerings (4th octave, alternative fingerings).

Exercise:

1. Select a small group of notes or few measures.
2. **SAY** the note names aloud while fingering them.
No rhythm is necessary.
3. Repeat 3-5 times without making a mistake.

Tool #2: 1 Note Per Click (1N/C)

Benefits

- Develops precision, speed, and coordination of fingers and helps iron out blips.
- Great for starting a new piece and getting comfortable with very challenging technical passages.

Exercise:

1. Select a small group of notes or few measures.
2. Set metronome to 72.
3. Change notes on the click as quickly as possible.
4. Pause and reflect on what you heard and physically felt.
5. Repeat 3-5 times. Increase tempo one click if desired.

Tool #3: I Am Go-ing Home (IAGH)

Source: *Flute 101: Mastering the Basics* by
Phyllis Avidan Louke and Patricia George



Benefits:

- Develops finger evenness and irons out blips. Brings awareness to finger speed and coordination.

Exercise:

1. Select two notes. Play back and forth slurred with this rhythm.
2. Pause and reflect on what you heard. Take note of adjustments for the next time.
 - a. Did I hear any blips? Which finger(s) are too slow?
 - b. Is my air hitting the sweet spot on both notes?
3. Repeat 3-5 times. Be sure to pause and reflect after each IAGH.

Tool #4: Note Grouping (NG)

Benefits:

- Organizes notes for more fluency and evenness.

Exercise:

1. Group notes into 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, or 6s.
2. Hold 1st note of each group and then slur to the 1st note of the next group.
3. Repeat each group 3-5 times.
4. Play music as written while phrasing with the groups

Tool #5: Anchor Notes (AN)

Benefits:

- Focuses on ironing out specific problem notes and stabilizing technical passages.

Exercise:

1. What note am I getting tripped up or where in the phrase am I getting stuck?
 - a. The anchor note is often that note or the one before.
2. Select an anchor note to try. Start at the beginning of the phrase. Stop on the note and then go on.
3. Reflect: what finger(s), note, or other aspect do I need to focus on to get through? Mark in the music.
4. Repeat 3-5 times and then try whole phrase while thinking about that anchor note.

Tool #6: Skeleton (SK)

Benefits:

- Wraps our ears around the melody or important harmonic notes within the technique.
- Great for shaping phrases before adding in technical elements.

Exercise:

1. Identify potential melodic/harmonic notes and play those notes slurred as a singing melody.
2. Reflect if those are the skeletal notes. If yes, explore phrase ideas until you find a shape you like.
3. Play the skeleton 3-5 times with that phrasing.
4. Play music as written with the skeleton and phrasing in mind.

Tool #7: Identify the Theory (TH)

Benefits:

- Organizes many notes into recognizable patterns or structures
- Can add to understanding of phrasing

Exercise:

1. What patterns are there?
 - a. Scales and/or arpeggios
 - b. Sequences/ repeated passages that start on different pitches