

# GENERAL TIPS FOR USING SMARTMUSIC EFFECTIVELY



The job of every music student is to improve, master, and remember what they have accomplished.

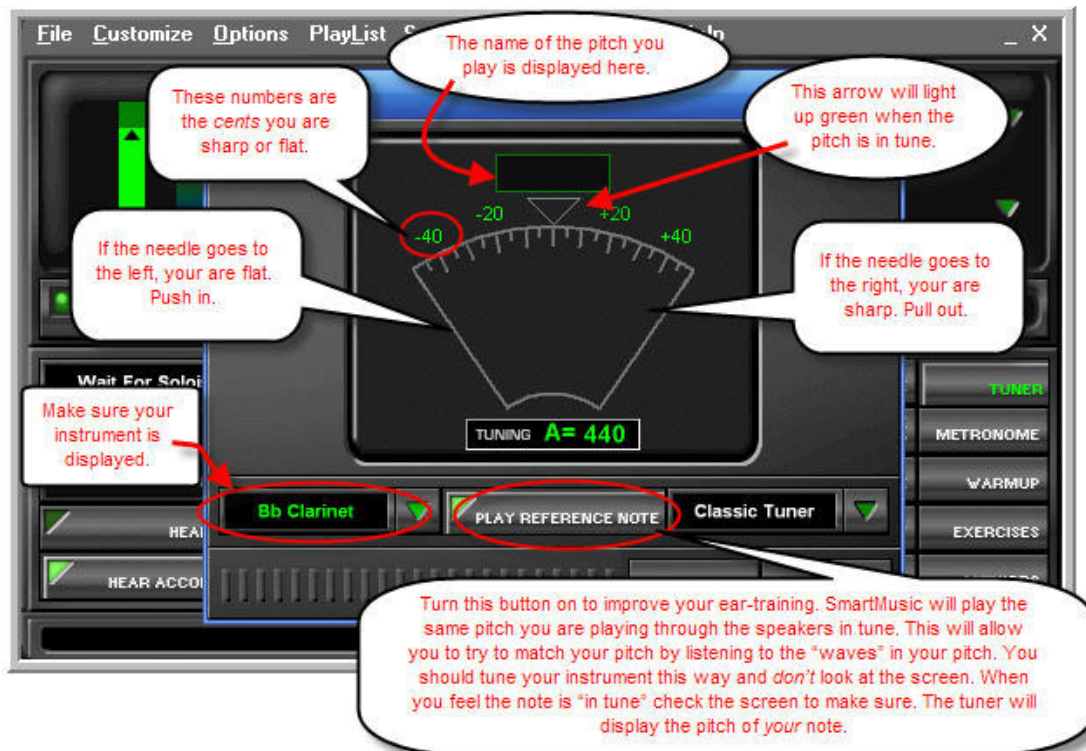
**Most students fail to practice with SmartMusic *correctly* in one of two basic ways:**

1. They practice in a way that fails to produce improvement.
2. They practice carefully and produce improvements, but they fail to practice in a way that ensures a lasting memory what they've learned.

Having a SmartMusic subscription at home is one way to help students learn how to practice effectively, all while enjoying the process along the way. Many students become excited about the potential benefits of using SmartMusic, but they quickly become frustrated by the program because ***they simply don't know where to start or they fail to take the time to learn about what the program can really do.***

**The following are some tips and music study skills that will help students improve their practicing techniques and ease certain frustrations with SmartMusic:**

- Select a time of day that is free from interruptions and use this time each day.
- Choose a place to practice that is free from distractions.
- **Warm up carefully.** (This is the most important part of practicing, yet it is the part that is skipped the most by students.) See your Band Director for simple and effective warm-ups.
- **Tune carefully.** (Many students will see less "red notes" in their SmartMusic assessments once they learn to play in tune.) FOR MORE HELP WITH TUNING, CLICK THE HELP BUTTON ON SCREEN.

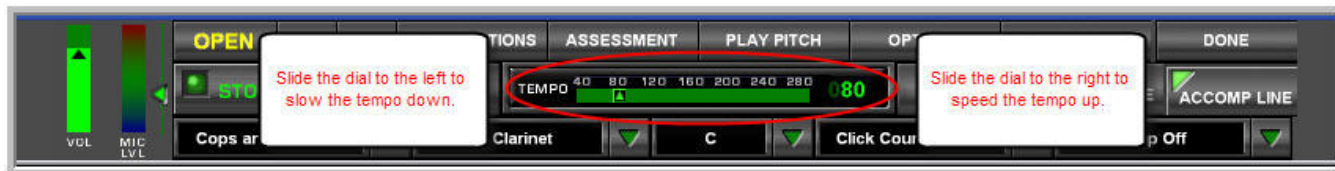


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# GENERAL TIPS FOR USING SMARTMUSIC EFFECTIVELY CONTINUED

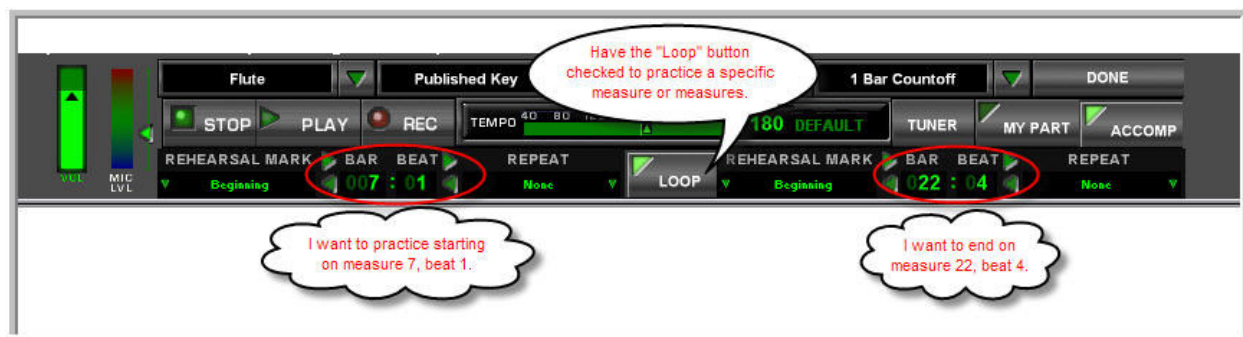


- **Set a goal for the session:** ONE scale; ONE exercise; specific sections of a piece; or even ONE measure that's giving you trouble. It may be a rhythm, the notes, or the tempo.
- **Work on it slowly**, and *then* build up your speed gradually. Before leaving it, put it together with the rest of the line. Don't try to do too much at one sitting - this is a common mistake with students.



**IMPORTANT:** Just because your Band Director wants a specific tempo for the finished product, doesn't mean you can't practice at a slower tempo and build yourself up to that speed. **There is a reason why you are given 1-2 weeks to complete an assignment!**

- **Use the "loop" feature:** To learn a musical instrument you must learn to master many physical skills. Repetition of a problem area reinforces muscle memory and helps develop those physical skills.



**IMPORTANT:** It does you no good to practice a song/exercise from beginning to end if you keep making mistakes. By doing that, you haven't practiced anything.

If you are having a problem with a specific measure or measures, go back and work on that spot. Once you are able to successfully play the "problem" measures, THEN go back and put it together with the rest of the exercise/song.

Playing an instrument is very physical. So, remember to rest when you get tired. You can always come back later (or even tomorrow) to try again. Keep in mind, however, that your body might not remember what you practiced the next day. So, you may have to go through this process more than once. **There is a reason why you are given 1-2 weeks to complete an assignment!**

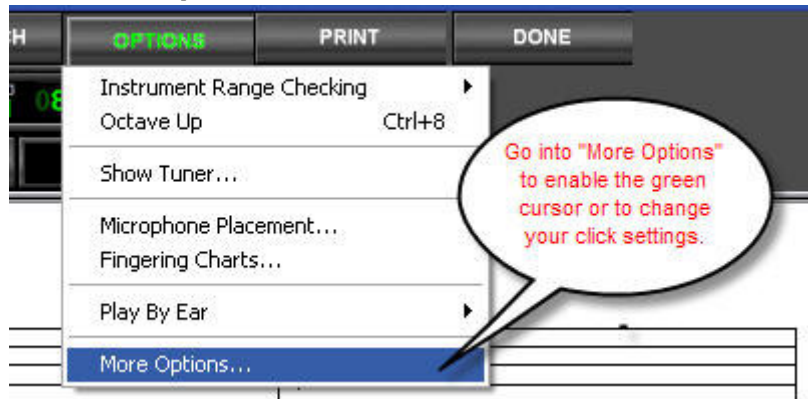
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# GENERAL TIPS FOR USING SMARTMUSIC EFFECTIVELY CONTINUED

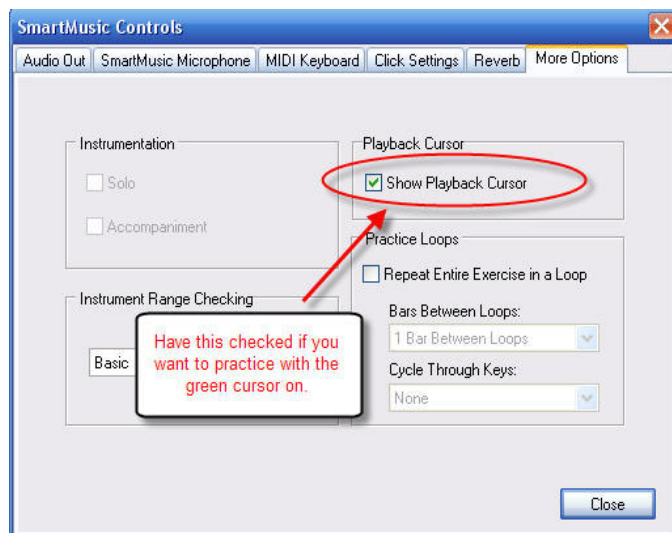


- **Use the green cursor and/or the click settings features to your advantage:** Just because your Band Director wants you to complete the assignment without the help of the green cursor and/or the clicks, doesn't mean you can't *practice* with them. Use the the green cursor and/or the clicks for a while, and when you think you are ready, try playing the exercise/song without them. **There is a reason why you are given 1-2 weeks to complete an assignment!**

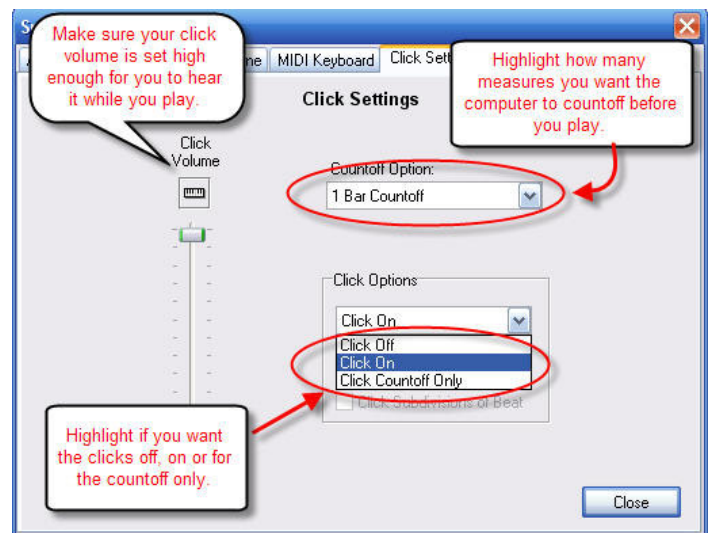
## Go to the Options Menu:



## How to display the green cursor:



## How to adjust the click settings:



It can sometimes be difficult to hear what is coming out of the computer (i.e. clicks, the music, etc.) while playing your instrument at the same time. Therefore, your Band Director HIGHLY recommends that you practice while using headphones. Plug the headphones in to your computer so that you can hear the clicks and/or the music clearer. However, you might want to have one ear that is "open" and not using a headphone so you can hear yourself playing, as well.

In short, practicing a musical instrument takes time, dedication, and patience. It is easy to get frustrated without guidance. Use the computer as a practice tool, but if you are still struggling and need help, ASK! Above all, as much as possible, try to relax and enjoy the process.

**See next page for a suggested practice schedule.**

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Suggested practice schedule:

| Material Practiced  | Minutes | Goal  |
|---|---------|---|
| Long tones; easy drills; breathing exercises                  | 5       | Warm-up of embouchure (lip & mouth position) and instrument; good tone production |
| New material; individual improvement; assignments; look ahead | 15-20   | Develop new exercises; increase range; new songs; new lessons in book             |
| Familiar exercises and etudes                                 | 10-15   | Improvement of finger dexterity; tonguing; and overall fluency                    |
| Personal music choices  | 5-10    | Play things you enjoy   |