6 Keys To Learning A Musical Instrument

by Mark Cole

Over the years, I have heard numerous people comment on how they wish they could play a musical instrument. Along the way I have learned to play over a dozen instruments. My love of playing instruments and worshiping God has opened the door for me to travel around the world numerous times. Here are a few tips to help you be successful.

1. Get Started

It is no good to just wish you could do something. You can do anything if you have the right plan and motivation and put consistent effort into it. So just start. Here's how…

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing. ~ Walt Disney

2. Buy Or Rent A Decent Instrument

What instrument are you thinking about learning? There are dozens. What instrument inspires you…piano, guitar, saxophone, violin or drums? If you are not sure which instrument to buy, ask an experienced musician.

The instruments that I own vary from $25 Horner Harmonicas (10 of those) to a $90 ukulele to $300-$600 guitars (4 of those) to a $400 flute to $2500 Yamaha Saxophones (three of those) to a $2000 Roland Synth and a $7000 used Yamaha Grand Piano. Generally speaking, the more money you invest in an instrument, the easier it is to play and the better it sounds.

Another way to initially go is to rent an instrument. Most music stores will gladly rent you a decent instrument until you find out whether you like it and will stick to it.

3. Get a good teacher

Good teachers are worth their weight in gold. They will help you proceed quickly and efficiently. They will keep you accountable and motivated. They will help you over various stumbling blocks and be able to answer your questions.

These days you can also learn off YouTube and various video series. They are extremely helpful and cheaper. But, to be successful, you have to be very disciplined. Most people are not that disciplined, so a teacher is still the best way to go!

4. Find an hour per day to practice

You can have the best teacher in the world but if you do not get disciplined and practice, you will not progress very far. Life is busy but somehow people always find time to watch TV and do the stuff they like. Carve out an hour a day from your schedule and make that hour sacred. Daily, consistent practice is the only way to be successful in learning music.

If it is important to you, you will find a way. If it's not, you'll find an excuse.

5. Get passionate about it!

You will only stick with something that you become passionate and even obsessive about. I love to play musical instruments! When I was learning piano it was not unusual for me to spend two to four hours a day practicing. With every instrument I learned, I would put in consistent practice time until I got to the level that I was happy with.

This year I learned to play the ukulele. I bought an instrument online, watched videos on YouTube and blogs online about fingerings, strumming patterns and techniques and how to hold it. Then I practiced it daily. Recently, I played 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow' Hawaiian style as an accompaniment for a great singer at a wedding.

6. Do not give up!

Skill comes from consistently adding to what you learned the day before. The secret to getting good at anything is to not give up! I started learning musical instruments when I was a kid and I just never quit. Along the way I have seen people who were equally as talented but they gave up. They quit. I just never did.

For more on this…check out my blog: The Secret To Learning Difficult Skills

If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride – and never quit, you'll be a winner. The price of victory is high but so are the rewards. ~ Paul Bryant

Did you know that playing a musical instrument is one of the only activities that uses your whole brain?

Question: What musical instrument have you always wanted to learn? What is stopping you from starting to learn?

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The article above and many additional insights may be found on Mark's blog at http://markcole.ca/

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