

Solfège Practice Guidelines

Musicianship 102-2
Prof. Joseph Stillwell

1. Determine the key you are in, either major or minor.
(*Hint: look at the beginning and ending notes.*)
2. Give yourself tonic.
3. Set the key. Sing the following up and down:
I chord: 1-3-5, V6⁵ chord: 7-2-4-5, I chord: 1-3-5
(*This sets the 7-note scale clearly in your musical imagination.*)
4. Always conduct as you sing, and *do not stop to fix mistakes!*
If you make mistakes, analyze what went wrong and sing the excerpt again.
5. Imagine each note you sing on a piano keyboard.
The keyboard is a musical ruler. Develop a clear visual image in your mind, and musical distances and relationships become instantly clearer.
6. Each note in a scale is unique.
Focus on the *flavor* or quality of each note in the diatonic scale. Each note has its own distinct character and tendencies. Try to become conscious of every scale degree you sing. This will deepen your musical imagination infinitely.
7. Consistent practice is essential.
Aim to practice daily; just ten minutes will do. Essentially, you are learning a new language. You need repetition and reinforcement to make it second nature. The more you engage with singing, the easier and more enjoyable it will become. Balance learning new material (and only singing it once or twice) with the mastery of specific excerpts (aim to memorize!). Both types of practice reinforce each other.