



# Top 10 Tips Learn The Piccolo

## Quick Guide

PROUDLY WRITTEN BY PRO-PICCOLO PLAYER, CHLOË VINCENT

**ted's list**

BY ROBERT EMERY

# 1 Use Earplugs For Loud Practice

The piccolo has a sound one octave higher than the flute. It is that small embouchure hole that makes the piccolo a small, but a fierce instrument. So protect your hearing and wear **earplugs**. The earplugs I use are **these**. They do the trick just nicely!

## Shape Freely & Noise Reduction Upgrade



**Brand:** Cruchan®

**Name:** Silicone Sleeping Earplugs

**Quantity:** 6Pairs

**Application:** Swimming Working

**Colour:** Blue

Studying



# 2 Challenge Yourself

Playing a musical instrument like the Piccolo is like going exploring. It only truly seems like it's been worthwhile when you find something new.

A terrific way to make this happen is by engaging with the Piccolo community via a regular magazine, online forum, or YouTube channel. Our **Ted's List Facebook VIP Group** has a lot of musicians that help and support each other; so come and join that.

A magazine, for instance, will have new columns and tips for you to read each month and many of the writers give out small weekly lessons complete with new exercises to try and enable you to improve.

Online discussion boards will have discussions between different piccolo players on a number of subjects. Watch out though. These can get pretty heated sometimes!

And a good YouTube channel will post completely new video tutorials each week for you to work through. If you haven't done it yet, check out the **Ted's List YouTube channel**, where we have 100's of video lessons on all musical instruments.



# 3 Film Yourself And Watch Back

Filming yourself can be brutal but is definitely worth it. You can check on things like:

1. Fingering
2. Intonation
3. Sound
4. Your lip (embouchure position)
5. Your tone

It helps to have a tuner handy when playing back the music, to check your pitch. All woodwind players occasionally suffer from intonation issues, especially when they start playing, so don't worry about it!



# 4 Make Sure You Warm Up

Try starting or ending your practice with some breathing warm-ups – with or without your piccolo. Not only will this improve your breath control but it is also very relaxing – think of it the same way as meditation or mindfulness! Always warm up your body before you start to practice piccolo – do a few simple shoulder and neck stretches before you play and your body will thank you for it!



# 5 Exercise

You can do finger exercises without your instrument! Try lifting one finger at a time whilst resting your hand on a desk to improve finger dexterity. Useful if you're bored in a meeting or during a maths lesson!



# 6 Play With Others Or At Least A Recording

Play along with a recording to practice orchestral excerpts. It's much more fun than playing alone! And if you want to see the main difference between the Flute and Piccolo, watch this great little video.



# 7 Decide A Target For Each Practice Session

Perhaps you plan to focus on dynamics, tuning, or phrasing. This helps you practice more efficiently so you don't get stuck in a rut.

A well-structured practice schedule provides you with support and focus during those valuable practice hours. It will ensure you don't waste your energy and time trying to figure out what to practice, looking at Twitter, or just generally wasting time.

To start with, shut down your telephone (or at a minimum, place it on Do Not Disturb).

Next, get yourself comfortable. Have your glass of water, your mug of tea (or whatever drink you need) ready, and waiting.

Then, structure your practice routine. Have a seat and tell yourself "today I'm going to concentrate on my sound and tone". Or possibly "I need to look after my bottom lip, so I'll be checking my intonation at all times to see if my embouchure is correct". Or even "I'm so used to playing the flute, that I need to concentrate on blowing as much air as possible through the instrument to build my stamina".



It doesn't really make any difference what exactly it is, as long as it's a conscious thought from you with a macro-aim.

Try to remember, macro goals and objectives are the way forward. Lots of mini things to target, so when you achieve them, you'll get a feeling of self-confidence and a boost in your efforts.

It's often recommended that you allocate a certain amount of time to each element you need to practice within your routine. The more you should work towards something – scales for example – then the more time you need to allocate it.

Out of every one of these tips on learning to practice Piccolo, this one is the element that can easily make a massive difference fast.

# 8 A Music Stand Is A Must

You can't learn how to play properly unless you have a music stand.

Out of all the things on this page, obtaining a music stand is definitely the simplest thing to accomplish, and as a consequence the best tip to follow!

Spending your money on a decent **music stand** means you can have the sheet music at the perfect height for your eyes. This, subsequently, helps you have the right posture whilst playing your instrument in order to produce a good sound. Meaning your playing technique gets better and better. Every little helps!

Using a foldable stand is fine – especially with regards to having one for when you have to bring your own personal stand to a gig, recording session, or music class. In this case, we recommend **this collapsible stand**. However, for 90% of your time playing, you are doing so at home. And this is where we do not recommend using a collapsible stand. Flip-style stands often slide down. They have a tendency to break quickly. They tend to fall over with a heavy book. So generally, they're not too dependable. This is why for your own home, we recommend **this type of strong, non-foldable music stand...**



Yes, it may cost a bit more initially, but it will be such a beneficial investment, and many good music stands can last as long as ten years. For comparison, a poorly manufactured one can break in a few weeks.

Overall, this is the finest kind of music stand I've ever used. It's reliable, has got a ton of impressive testimonials, and I also have one at home that I love...

# 9 Find A Good Teacher

This tip is very crucial – get private lessons. Look for a flute teacher who can play piccolo, as they are similar instruments that require slight alternate fingerings. Provided you can afford to get them, you'll progress quicker, and much better when compared with every other means of tuition.

But herein lies the challenge – there are lots of teachers to choose from, just how do you select one?

Look for simple factors:

Do you really like having sessions with your teacher, or do you really dread them?

Are you fired up each week to go and see them?

Do they really motivate you?

Have you been looking to play your instrument every day because you enjoy the feeling so much?

Do they really help you to recognize tricky things simply?



My very first advice is always personal recommendations. Google around, start looking on Facebook and LinkedIn to discover who are your nearby teachers.

Great teachers will in most cases have recommendations splurting out of the mouths of their pupils all over the place! They often have a Facebook group. And they can often have a waiting list. All these things are an excellent sign that the teacher is worthwhile and in demand.

Should this be the case, jump on that waiting list, and ask for a trial lesson.

Whatever happens, don't panic, or stress. Nothing is forever, so if you find a teacher and it doesn't work out, simply begin looking for another teacher! You can never be 100% sure regarding a connection between two people, so just go for it!

# 10 Learn Music That You Love

This really is a very simple tip, but also one of the most beneficial. To put it simply, playing Piccolo will likely be ten times more fun if you're learning the music that empowered you to get the Piccolo, in the first place.

This applies if you're a newcomer, intermediate or advanced player and also applies to flute music too.

Not only does this increase each musician's repertoire but it also helps to keep them inspired and makes such that the enjoyment of performing music is never lost.

If you only ever play your exercises so you become the most technically perfect music performer on earth, you're going to get fed up quickly!

On the other hand, when you can pick up the Piccolo right after a tricky day at school or work and de-stress for the evening by playing through your favorite tunes, then you'll associate playing the Piccolo with fun and excitement.



# Chloë Vincent

## Author

Chloë is a graduate of the Guildhall School and concert highlights include the BRIT awards with Billie Eilish,

The Who at Wembley Stadium and performing for the Queen at Buckingham Palace. Chloë regularly records at studios such as Abbey Road, working for artists such as Kanye West, Madonna and Michael Kiwanuka as well as film sessions. Orchestral work covers tours of China and Japan and performing at the Musikverein in Vienna. Chloë lives in Oxfordshire with her trumpeter husband and enjoys cooking and playing board games in her spare time.



# ted's list

BY ROBERT EMERY

I'm Robert, and I'm lucky to have been a professional musician since the age of 16. But if my name is Robert, why is my website called Ted's List?!?

In 2015 I became a Dad. Teddy entered the world and has since gone on to love music as much as I do. Music is my life and passion, touring the world as a conductor and pianist, performing with the most amazing talents on this planet. But how could I help Teddy's friends and parents with their musical education? Ted's List is the answer.

So here I am... Sharing my story, knowledge and passion, in the hope it inspires you to commit to music in some form. If I could get one 'result' from this site, it is getting you to take ACTION. All with the hope that you have music wrapped around you like I've done my whole life... It's what I call my 'Musical Duvet'.

I really do hope you find the content on my blog helpful. I'm sure it will save you time and money in finding the very best of what you need, for the lowest possible price. And most importantly of all – I hope it inspires you in your music-making.

