

Learning Music as an Adult - How to Stop Making Excuses and Start Making Music

By Christina Thompson

Have you ever wanted to learn to play an instrument or sing, but you find an excuse not to every time the opportunity arises? Or, if you have started learning to play an instrument already, do you invent reasons to avoid practicing and improving? Recognizing and getting rid of excuses like these is a powerful way to help you become the musician you want to be. This article will help you identify common excuses that can hinder your musical growth and develop a positive mindset that will empower you to grow as a musician.



No one in my family has ever played music, so I probably don't have the talent.

Few people think it's bad to be the first college graduate in one's family, but many use the excuse of being the first musician in the family to quit before they even begin. The notion that you need a great deal of natural talent to make music is false. The natural ability you already have is enough to help you set up a rewarding musical hobby, or even more. Most musical expertise is the result of consistent practice, not talent. Learning to sing or play an instrument involves training your body and mind to do certain things; if you make time to do this training, you'll make progress regardless of your level of natural talent.

I don't know where to start!

If you've never played music before, it may seem difficult to know where to start. One solution to this problem is to start small. Making a pledge to listen to a new recording every week, setting aside time to attend a concert, or reading about new musicians can help you become more musical, and can give you a solid foundation for learning to make music yourself. Once you've incorporated some musical activities into your life, making the leap toward playing your own music is much easier.

I'm too old to start learning music.

If you're beginning music later in life, you may worry about how old you'll be when you finally get "good" at music. The answer: You'll be the same age you would be if you didn't try music at all! Music isn't just for kids and people who have previous musical experience; everyone can find musical success regardless of the age they begin playing music.

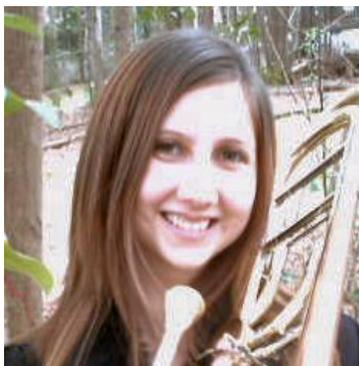
I can't practice because I don't have any time.

This is an especially popular excuse: "I want to learn to sing, but I don't have enough time to practice." Life is busy--we have family, friends, and jobs that require our attention. Fortunately, you don't need hours of daily practice learn music. Even if you practice only a few minutes each day, it's possible to develop musical skills you can be proud of. Try talking to your family about setting aside 15 minutes each evening to practice. Often, talking to your family not only helps solidify your commitment to practice, but also gives you a supportive cheering squad at home. As you make music a daily habit, you'll be surprised how much time you really have to practice!

Playing music is too expensive.

It's true, you can spend piles of money on music. You can get a high-end instrument, lessons with a renowned teacher, and a stack of expensive recordings. But if money is tight, you can still experience the joy of playing music. If you want to play an instrument but are put off by the high price of equipment, forego the chain stores and check out small, local music stores. Local music stores often have a selection of less expensive used instruments, plus staff with the expertise to find the instrument that's right for you at a good price. If you enlist the help of a knowledgeable musician, you can even find quality instruments on classified outlets like Craigslist. It's also possible to find music teachers who are willing to be flexible on price or barter their services.

Even the most accomplished people put themselves down with excuses like these, robbing themselves of the possibility of having an enjoyable musical hobby. If you find yourself using these excuses, a great way to disarm them is to turn them around to say the opposite. If you think, "Nobody else in my family can sing, so I probably can't either," turn it into, "I have the opportunity to be the first singer in my family!" Or, if it's tempting to say, "My son will be out of college before I'm good at my instrument," imagine instead the pride you'll feel when you can play at his graduation party. If excuses have kept you from your musical dreams, you can choose to send them packing--you have nothing to lose, but a lifetime of exciting musical experiences to gain!



Christina Thompson is a professional trombonist and music educator living in Raleigh, North Carolina. Christina is dedicated to helping trombonists of all ages discover, develop, and enjoy their signature musical sound in a positive, healthy environment. For more information, please visit <http://www.summerglen-music.com>.