



# DOJO UNIVERSITY

Music, not just bagpipes.

Do you multitask?

No matter how much you think you might be... chances are, you're not.

What most people call multitasking is actually task switching, which is when your brain has to rapidly switch from one task to another, like when you're participating in the now far-too-common pastime of settling into a cosy evening of scrolling on your phone while also watching TV.

But did you catch all of the dialogue and beautiful cinematography of that show you're watching while you were distracted reading and replying to messages and posts? Or did you have to ask your spouse to repeat something they laughed at, or rewind to watch a pivotal moment you missed?

When you multitask, your 'brain bandwidth' overloads trying to keep track of all the tasks. Studies also show that multitasking can be bad for your overall health. It can erode your long-term memory and ability to focus, increase stress levels, and make you more impulsive.

Plus, it doesn't actually get stuff done faster – research shows that the mental effort of switching between tasks costs as much as 40% of your productive time.

You get the picture. Distractions are bad. They derail the precious, limited time you have available to learn new things.

So setting up a distraction-free time and space to work on your piping is essential for you to meaningfully improve. Here are some simple ways you can break the "multitasking" habit and mindfully improve your practice:

Schedule in your practice time. Do it now (well, actually, after you read this – remember, one thing at a time!). Go to your planner, whether it's on paper or in your phone app or calendar of choice, and mark out the time during the next week that you will dedicate to practice each day. 15-30 minutes is more than enough, but even one tune (5 minutes) regularly is better than an hour twice a week.

Make it a priority in your mind, and commit to sticking to it.

Create a dedicated practice space (preferably a separate room) where your pipes are already assembled as much as possible, and all your music is on its stand and ready for you to walk in and begin to practice with as few barriers to entry as possible. Do not share your space with others, and ask people you live with not to bother you while you're in there. As soon as you enter, put your devices in 'airplane mode', and close the door.

Keep your instrument setup as simple as possible. Remove needless gadgets and crutches, so you can spend less time troubleshooting instrument issues, and more focusing on skills and techniques you need to work on.

Clearly define the one thing you will focus on before you attempt to play anything. This could be as scientific as avoiding that crossing noise from C to E, or as artistic as 'smooth out the dot-cut contrast in phrase 2'. But either way, make sure it's a single item of focus.

These are all great ways to reject multitasking and maintain a singular focus as you work on improvement. But do you know the best reason to have a singular focus when you're practising?

Like anything you might undertake mindfully.. you'll enjoy your piping more.

And at the end of the day, isn't that why we all do this?

All the best,

Andrew Douglas

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Dojo University

<https://dojouniversity.com/>