

# How to deal with fast passages

In the beginning, it is important to "greet" each new difficult passage!

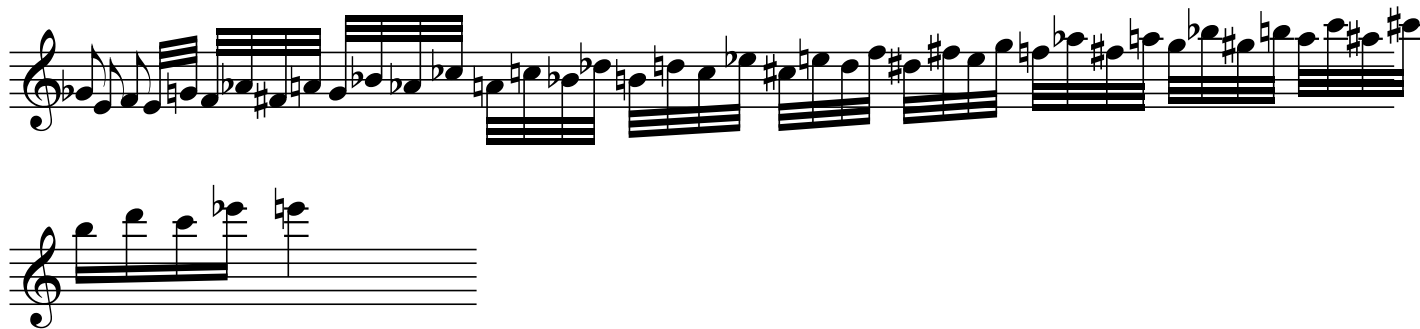
If a passage is new, one must of course begin slowly in order to carefully get acquainted with it.

When you are dealing with a passage that you've been working on over a period of time, it's especially important that you don't begin practicing it in the tempo that you reached yesterday.

Today is a new day: "greet" the passage in your own tempo, without metronome and without pressure to play it quickly.

Have faith that with the method explained below, you'll have the passage in yesterday's tempo and faster!

As an example, here is an excerpt from Jaques Ibert's "Piece" for flute solo:



Luckily, this excerpt is cadenza-like. One can play the beginning and end a bit slower. However, for these exercises we'll take the 32 notes in a steady tempo.

***The motto is: work from the end quickly, from the beginning slowly***

If your goal is to reach the passage above in tempo eighth-note = 120, do the following: working backwards (from the end) take as many notes as you can play in tempo. (In order to make the example more readable, I'll write everything in 16th notes)

As an example we'll take the last 5 notes. It could of course be less!  
Repeat the passage 4 times:



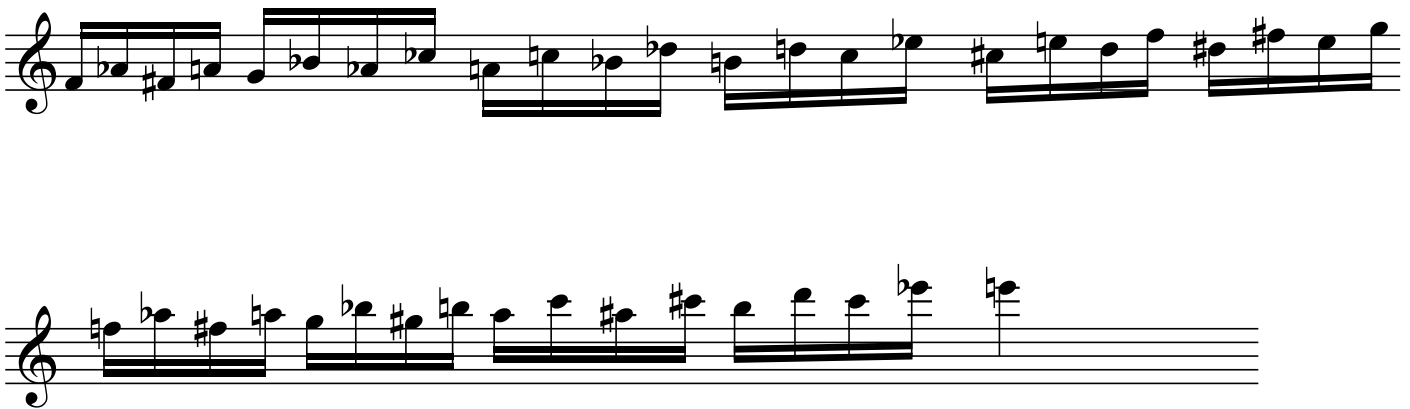
Then go back 4 notes, overlapping so that the first note of the last passage is the last note of the new.



When you are confident enough, you can put the two passages together, going to the end. This is the beauty of starting at the end. The last notes do get more practice/repetition. If find they often need it, not because the notes are more difficult, but because the fingers and brain can tend to lag behind at the end of a long passage. However, keep focus on working on these small sections. Only play past the passage in question if you feel very secure.

When you have worked on the whole passage in this manner, you can begin at the beginning, but slowly!

♩ = c. 60 or slower



Repeat the entire passage in differing rhythms:



Then play the entire passage in the original rhythm, but faster.

At this point there is a trick: instead of steadily increasing the metronome, set it (digitally) 6 numbers faster, then 3 numbers *slower*. A good explanation for this can be found: <http://www.zaralawler.com/blog/?p=33>

In order to avoid injury, do not practice technical passages longer than 10 or 15 minutes. Play for that amount of time, then take a break of 1-3 min.

The next day: "greet" the passage. Play it from the beginning slowly, without pressure and with relaxed mind and fingers.

As previously, take a passage from the end that you can play in tempo. You might notice that you can achieve more notes in tempo!

When a part of the passage remains difficult, make a loop.

Find a place that (ideally) begins and ends with the same note. Here are two possible loops from this passage. There are of course more.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff contains a sequence of notes with two loops identified by brackets and arrows. Loop 1 is a five-note sequence: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4. Loop 2 is a six-note sequence: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The bottom staff continues the sequence of notes from the passage.

Loop 1: A five-note sequence in treble clef, starting and ending on G4. The notes are G4, A4, B4, A4, G4. A bracket above the notes is labeled "Loop 1" and "5".

Loop 2: A six-note sequence in treble clef, starting and ending on G4. The notes are G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4. A bracket above the notes is labeled "Loop 2" and "5".

Supplemental literature:

Taffanel/Gaubert - 17 Exercices journaliers (Leduc)

Trevor Wye - Practice Book for the Flute: Book 2 Technique (Novello)

Benoit Berbiguer - 18 etudes (Fischer)

Marcel Moyse - Etudes et exercices techniques (Leduc)