

Introduction to Online Practice

Recorded practice exercises and accompanying scripts are provided for all of the accented sounds that are likely to occur for people from most language backgrounds. You will be practicing only the ones appropriate to you, based on your personal speech analysis. In developing your individualized program, I have already selected the sounds you will be practicing and I will tell you which ones to practice at the appropriate time. To profit most from this program, it is important to practice the sounds in the order in which they are assigned-to take advantage of the "principle of linguistic generalization" and to maximize your learning of the new sounds in the shortest amount of time possible. The exercises have been recorded by both a male and a female speaker to familiarize you with the English pronunciation as spoken in different voices.

1) Exercises – Single Word

1. Listen to the entire set of words the first time to get familiar with the words you will be practicing. Listen to hear the target sound. Next, play one word and pause, repeating the word as you heard it. Try saying it several times. When your production sounds correct to you, you are ready to record your word. Use your recording device or online recorder (<http://www.speechmodification.com/online-practice/category/recording-tools>) to record yourself. Then play the original recording again, and your recording, and compare the two.
2. Decide if your pronunciation matches that of the recorded models. If not, record yourself again until you are satisfied. After you have gone through all of the words and feel most of your productions match those of the speakers, you are now ready to practice the Sentence Exercises.

2) Exercises – Sentences

1. Listen to the entire set of sentences. As you listen, focus your attention on the key words containing the target sound in the sentence. Then, listen two more times for the phrasing (word groups) and the overall rate, rhythm and intonation of the sentence. The object is to form an auditory image of how the entire sentence sounds. As an analogy, suppose you look at a picture a few seconds and then close your eyes. You can still visualize the picture in your mind. Then if you look at the picture again, you will notice additional details you missed the first time. The ears work in the same way. If you listen to a sentence once, you will be able to "hear" how it sounded in your mind. With a second hearing, you will pick up additional details you missed the first time. After listening one or two more times, you should be able to remember and "hear in your mind" the entire sentence. Now, you are ready to practice repeating the sentence exactly as it is recorded.
2. Next, listen one more time, and say the sentence, making sure you follow the same phrasing and intonation. The purpose is to imitate the entire sentence correctly, and not just the target sound in the key words. Remember that in speaking, individual words are not separated but, rather, are grouped together in phrases that are pronounced as one continuous stream of movements. Thus, as you practice, try to achieve a smooth flow of words by imagining that you are pronouncing each phrase as a single word. In some cases, you may find that certain combinations of words are difficult to pronounce, and the sounds do not flow smoothly. When this occurs, do not continue to practice the entire sentence. Instead, isolate that particular combination of words from the sentence, and practice them alone several times. Then, when you have perfected your speech movements for that group of words, go back and practice them in the entire sentence. If you cannot remember the sentence, this means you have not yet

formed the auditory image that is necessary to allow you to produce it correctly. In this case, you should listen to it one or two more times before practicing it again.

3. Practice each sentence until you feel you are matching that of the speaker in the recorded model. Then, record yourself, and compare your production with that of the audio model. If you are not satisfied, practice one or two more times, and then go on to the next sentence. It is not necessary to master each sentence before going to the next one. It is better to complete the entire group of sentences during one practice session.

Practice Considerations

Changing your native language speaking habits is a gradual process that can only be accomplished through practice. The more you practice, the faster you will develop your new speech habits. As a guide, you should plan to spend about an hour a day practicing. As a general rule, it is better to practice two or three times a day for about 20 - 30 minutes, rather than concentrating your practice into one long session. This will allow more flexibility in arranging your practice times. Regardless of when you decide to practice, however, it is important to establish a regular practice routine from the very beginning. The way you practice is also just as important as the amount of time you practice, so you should study this section very closely and continue to refer to it, until you have perfected your practice techniques.