

Career Counselor

SIX TIPS TO GET ORGANIZED

by Jon Regen, recording artist of critically acclaimed album, *Let It Go*

Between keeping our chops up and plotting to make money with those chops, musicians often feel like we're not making progress in either area. In the immortal words of Ferris Bueller, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." In that spirit, here are six tips to help you organize your musical life.

1. Make a schedule.

Lawyers and bankers aren't the only ones who keep regular business hours. Some of the most successful musicians have scheduled their lives with scientific precision – John Coltrane was rumored to keep a rigorous itinerary. Start keeping an accurate accounting of your time. You'll realize just how much you have, and how much you may be wasting.

2. Keep a practice diary.

Do you ever wonder why you *still* can't improvise in G \flat ? Maybe it's because

you haven't set aside time to attack it. Keep a daily log with one column for what you need to practice, and another for how much of it you actually get through each day. Slowly but surely, the second column will catch up with the first.

3. Get an accountant.

You'd be surprised at how few musicians are up to speed on proper tax and business accounting. Find a top-notch accountant who has experience working for musicians and other self-employed people in the arts. Accountants study money like you study musical gear, and can put you on the road to financial freedom.

4. Find a regular gig.

Somewhere near you there's a hotel, restaurant, or bar that will give you a regular performance spot. Forget money or fame for a minute – this is

about having a home base for your music. A regular gig gives you a reason to work new material into your shows, while simultaneously building a buzz for your musical brand.

5. Set a daily goal.

You can write a song a day. Or learn a new production technique from that tech book you bought but never opened. Set a daily agenda to accomplish one new musical task before you go to sleep at night. You and your music will be glad you did.

6. Get in shape.

Think musicians party all night? Think again. It takes physical strength and stamina to perform on a high level night after night. Now that your chops and books are in order, get your health together, too. Even a small amount of daily exercise will keep you in the game for years to come. ☒

