Strategies for Independent Pronunciation Practice  
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“Pronunciation learning occurs gradually, primarily out of class and mainly in situations of covert rehearsal—time when language learners focus on form, practice in private, engage in self-teaching, self-monitor and self-correct their speech in areas of importance to them, and practice their self-corrections.” (Dickerson, 1989)  

Try the following strategies. Regular practice is the only way to make real changes. Commit yourself to doing some or all of the following every day. With enough time and attention, you should be able to improve your pronunciation.  

Self-Diagnosis and Goal Setting  
1. Contrastive Analysis: Become aware of the typical pronunciation errors made by speakers of your first language. What are some problem sounds for speakers of your language when speaking English? Do you make some of the same errors?  
2. Goal Setting: Based on your contrastive analysis (see #1), your experiences communicating in English (see #13), and your plans for using English, decide which pronunciation points are most important for you to work on. Be as specific so that you can focus your practice and track improvement in these areas. Are there particular vowel or consonant sounds that you need to work on first? What about word stress, sentence stress, and intonation? Revisit your goals regularly to acknowledge where you have made progress, and to add additional goals as needed.  

Psychomotor Development Through Drilling  
3. Private Practice for Feeling and Sound: Practice the new sound or stress pattern in a word silently or in slow motion, paying attention to how the pattern feels. Then practice the new sound or stress pattern out loud with eyes closed, focusing on how the speech pattern sounds.  
4. Drill, Drill, Drill: Read aloud (multiple times!) lists of words (or phrases/ sentences/passages) with many instances of challenging sound(s) to develop your muscle memory. These lists can be found in pronunciation textbooks, online, etc. Or create the lists yourself to include the most useful words/phrases for you.  
5. Word Lists: Keep a list of words you must say frequently or need to be able to say clearly and become familiar with the sounds and syllable stress pattern of each word for accurate pronunciation.  

Practicing With Longer Discourse  
6. Shadowing (Also Called “Tracking”): Choose a passage of recorded text spoken by a native or near-fluent English speaker. While listening, repeat after the speaker, mimicking the pronunciation features of that speaker.  
7. Analysis and Recording: Listen to a recorded passage. Transcribe (or look at a transcript of) the passage. Analyze and mark the pronunciation features. Listen several times and shadow the speaker while talking. Record yourself reading the passage and mimicking the pronunciation features as accurately as possible. Listen to your recording and compare it to that of the native speaker to analyze the similarities and differences.  
8. Read and Record: Find a reading in a textbook, newspaper, etc. Mark it for main features such as thought groups/pauses, stressed words, and intonation. Read it out loud and record it. Listen to the recording and evaluate your pronunciation in these areas.  
9. Look Up and Say: Practice a new stress pattern in sentences by (1) looking at the sentence or thought group, (2) practicing it a few times, and then (3) looking up and saying the sentence or thought group out loud without reading it. Try this technique with Strategies #6–8 and in any new situation that involves reading and speaking.
10. **Oral Journal**: Record yourself speaking about the thoughts and events of the day and then listen to the recording and make note of specific areas for improvement. Option A: Take a few notes of words and phrases you anticipate using before recording. Option B: Speak completely freely without prior planning.

**Real-World Application**

11. **Anticipation and Silent Rehearsal**: Anticipate a lecture, interaction, or conversation you plan to have. Look up any words or phrases you are unsure of. Rehearse what you will say in the anticipated speaking situation and practice out loud (and even record if you wish). Pay attention to stressing key words, using correct intonation patterns, pausing, etc. After the interaction, analyze how it went. What went well? What could have been better? Make a strategy for improvement for the next interaction.

12. **Self-Monitoring**: Choose 1 to 2 minutes per day during which you will pay very close attention to your own pronunciation in key areas such as word stress, sentence stress, thought groups, stressing key words, using rising/falling intonation, etc. Initially, practice this technique in “low-stakes” interactions such as with classmates and friends. As you become more comfortable with it, you can apply it in more formal situations and lengthen the time.

13. **Critical Incidents**: Make note of times you were misunderstood. What specific pronunciation features caused the problem? (Mis-assigned word stress? Lack of pausing? Lack of stressing key words? Other?) Use this strategy in combination with #2: “Goal Setting.” Use these critical incidents to adjust your goals as needed.

**Recommended Texts**

The following texts are well suited for independent learning:

For intermediate to advanced learners
- *Focus on Pronunciation* (Book 2 or 3) by Linda Lane (Longman, 2005)
- *English Pronunciation Made Simple* by Paulette Dae (Longman, 2005)

For lower-level learners
- *Focus on Pronunciation 1* by Linda Lane (Longman, 2005)
- *Well Said Intro* by Linda Grant (Heinle, 2007)
- *Pronunciation Pairs 2nd ed* by Baker & Goldstein (Cambridge, 2008)
- *Clear Speech from the Start* by Judy Gilbert (Cambridge, 2001)

**Online Resources**

For demonstrations of vowel and consonant sounds:
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/) (U.K)

For minimal pair practice: [http://www.manythings.org/pp/](http://www.manythings.org/pp/)

For syllable stress of words:
- [http://www.tc.umn.edu/~parke120/praatwebfiles/](http://www.tc.umn.edu/~parke120/praatwebfiles/)

For recordings (many with scripts) to practice shadowing and analysis:
- Storycorp (shorter recordings) [http://storycorps.org/](http://storycorps.org/)