How to Practice a Piece of Music

Step One- Do I know the names of the pitches?

If no, review then names of pitches in the clef you play in to learn where they are in the staff.

If/When yes, proceed to step two.

Step Two- Do I know the fingerings of the pitches?

If no, check your fingering chart to learn the fingerings of the pitches in each measure of music you are practicing.

If/When yes, proceed to step three.

Step Three- Can I do the fingerings in order?

If no, VERY slowly practice each fingering until you are comfortable doing them in order. While you do them, say the names of the pitches.

If/When yes, proceed to step four.

Step Four- Can I count the rhythms?

If no, review your rules for counting rhythms, and write in the countings of the rhythms in each measure of music you are working on.

If/When yes, proceed to step five.

Step Five- Can I count the rhythms and do the fingerings at the same time?

If no, SLOW THINGS DOWN to a speed where you can count and finger in rhythms at the same time. Gradually speed the tempo up to performance tempo.

If/When yes, proceed to step six

Step Six- Can I play the music in tempo?

If no, again, SLOW
THINGS DOWN to a speed
where you can play the
correct notes in the correct
rhythms. Gradually speed the
tempo up to performance
tempo.

If yes, proceed to step seven.

Step Seven- Can I play the music with all musical expressions?

If no, SLOW THINGS DOWN to a speed where you can play the music with correct rhythms, pitches, and musical expressions. Gradually speed the tempo up to performance tempo.

If/When yes,
CONGRATULATIONS!
You can play what you
are practicing!!

This process works for anything you are practicing. Whether it is one measure or an entire piece, follow these steps and you will be successful. Remember, when practicing, first practice what you have trouble playing, and then add that into what you can play. If possible, record yourself and check for mistakes; sometimes you make a mistake you didn't hear. Keep practicing; YOU CAN DO IT!