



AFTMD Session Tips

Sessions are a vital part of the AFTMD experience! In the late evenings, the sessions really get going and can run into the wee hours of the morning. Session etiquette has a lot of “don’ts” in it, but remember, this is supposed to be fun. Do play! Do have fun! Here are a few tips to consider.

- **Impromptu Sessions:** Often, a few people will be just sitting around playing tunes. Feel free to join in, but it is best to listen a bit and find your spot. As a general rule, play quietly if the session is more advanced than you are able to play.
- **Session genre:** Some impromptu sessions are mostly Old-Time, or mostly Irish, or mostly Cape Breton, or Québécois and so on. When you enter a session, listen a little. If you introduce a tune, try to stick within the genre of the session. If you can’t find the genre of session you were hoping for, feel free to start one!
- **Don’t dominate the session:** Regardless of your experience and confidence in sessions, let people around the circle start tunes. If your tempo/playing comfort is not quite up to the average for the session, it is best to start fewer tunes. If your comfort/ability is about right for the session, then start your share. If you are uncomfortable starting a tune, you can always ask if someone in the group will start it for you at your speed.
- **Late Night Sessions:** There are no formal session leaders at late-night sessions; add a post to the Community Notice Board to plan one, or just round up your fellow students and go for it! Remember that the outside noise curfew on campus is 9:30pm, so please move your session inside from that time on (preferably Deering or Turrets.) Be sensitive and respectful of those who might be sleeping in a building and do your best to choose a place accordingly.
- **Faculty-led sessions:** These sessions may be “headed up” by a faculty member, but they are there for you! We sometimes pair together faculty leaders who tend to play in the same genre (Irish, Scottish, etc.), but these scheduled sessions are the “anything goes” type, and faculty will be happy to join you in any tune you would like to play. Why not pick a tune from our [“Favorite Jam Tunes”](#) list, or one you’ve been working on recently. If you’re not sure what tunes others will know and be able to join you on, suggest a few and see which you have in common!

We know that playing in sessions can be daunting and nerve-wracking. We have all been there! Support others, and be ready to have them support you too. We encourage you to take a deep breath, and when it feels right, play that tune that you’ve been practicing hard at and dreaming of sharing!