

Red Hot Strings

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Exercises for Holding the Bow and Violin

Bow Exercises

**Each exercise should be done
for thirty seconds to one minute.**

1. **Windshield Wipers**- Use the right forearm to rock the bow from side to side. Keep the motion even. Recite a poem or sing a song as you do this.
2. **Stir the Pot**- with the tip of the bow pointing up, a circular motion is made. Try forward and backward as well as forward & backward circles.
3. **Landing the Butterfly**- Hold your left arm in front of your body. Land the bow hair on your arm by raising the entire bow keeping it parallel to the floor. The tip of the bow should be pointing to the left. Similarly you may land the tip of your bow hair onto your left shoulder. Try the same ideas by rocking the bow in a similar fashion to a windshield wiper.
4. **Elevator**- Pointing the tip of your bow upwards and keeping the stick of the bow perpendicular to the floor reach up as high as you can, then bend down landing the frog of your bow on the ground.
5. **Monkey Climbing**- Use your right fingers (no left hand helping) to gradually go from the frog to the tip and back again. Try to keep your thumb bent every time you make a move. Don't cheat by dropping or throwing your bow.
6. **Silent Samantha**-Land your bow on the violin strings about 2cm away from the violin's bridge so that the bow is straight, or parallel to the bridge. Try to land it without causing the violin to make any sound. Practice landing on individual strings. When you lift the bow off the strings again exaggerate the motion by pointing the tip downwards so that the hair is *inside out*. You should feel the bow being cradled in the middle digits and knuckles of your fingers. Don't use your fingertips to hold the bow!
7. **Rock & Roll**- Keeping your violin silent, rotate the stick of the bow over the hair by bending and straightening your right thumb. When you stop make sure that your thumb is bent. The bow's hair should be slightly angled towards your face. Now rock the bow over the strings in a silent fashion by lifting and lowering your right elbow.
8. **Leap Frogs**- Start by landing your bow hair on the violin strings at the frog of the bow. Lift it off the string and land it again in the middle of the bow. Try also landing it at the tip of the bow. Your arm should extend out in front of your belly button in order to land the bow straight every time. You may try smaller leaps if necessary.

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9. **Curvy Wurvy-** Land your bow on either the A or E string as close to the frog as you can get it. Use your pinky, or little finger to keep the bow balanced. Make sure it stays curved. Lift the little finger off the bow feeling the bow rock over to the G string. You should also exaggerate the wrapping action of your other fingers around the stick and frog as the bow moves. Replace the little finger onto the bow making sure it stays curved and apply some pressure. Your little finger may gradually straighten out a bit as you do this. This will cause the bow to rock back over to the higher strings. Your little finger will also gain strength the more you practice this motion.

Violin Exercises

Each exercise should be repeated four to ten times during every practice.

1. **No Hands-** Bring your violin to playing position. Keep supporting it over your left shoulder keeping it secured with your chin. Use your left hand and point to; your nose, the bridge of your violin, your scroll, any other part of your violin or your own body. Make sure that you stand over a carpet or your couch in case you drop the violin. It is actually best to get a person to spot you until you are used to holding the violin with no hands.
2. **Left Hand Placement-** Start with your left hand touching your right collarbone. Bring your left hand to playing position. Place your thumb at the side of the neck of your violin along side where your first finger would land. Your teacher is able to mark the exact spot for you. Make sure that your wrist stays out. Your fingers should curve gently above where they are to land on the strings. Repeat this several times so that you get very fast at setting your left hand in the correct place.
3. **Pizzicato-** Hold your violin in playing position. Make a fist with your right hand. Turn it so that your thumb is pointing downwards. Set your thumb against the side of your fingerboard. Pluck each string four times saying the name of the string out loud every time. Try some of the different rhythms that you have learned.
4. **Finger Tapping-** Using your left hand in the correct playing position, tap each finger on the strings so that your finger lands on the sticker or tape that your teacher placed on your fingerboard. Land the fingers so that they land on the fingertips in a gentle curved shape.