

Instrument	Holding & Left Hand Position	Bow Hold & Parallel Bowing	Common Problems/Difficulties	Maintenance & Care
Violin	- Begin in "rest position" with the instrument under your right arm, being careful not to press on the bridge.	- Index finger rests between first two joints on the grip of the bow.	- Bent/collapsed left wrist.	- Always wipe down the instrument and stick of bow after playing.
	- Curve your left hand around the bout of the instrument.	- Second finger touches the silver.	- Gripping the neck.	- Tune from below the pitch to avoid snapping a string.
	- Outstretch your left arm, flip the instrument upside down, and bring it to your left shoulder.	- Third finger should rest near the eye of the frog.	- Sliding/unparallel bow.	- Open case on a flat surface.
	- Turn your head slightly to the left and place your jaw on the chin rest.	- The pinky should be relaxed and placed on top of the stick. (Tap it to ensure flexibility.)	- Playing too close to the bridge or fingerboard.	- Avoid pressing on the bridge.
	- Nose, fingerboard, and left foot should be aligned.	- Thumb rests on the stick between the grip and the frog. Make sure it is bent!	- Straight thumb and/or pinky on right hand.	- Avoid touching the horsehairs and the "highway."
	- Elbow is below the instrument.	- Elbow joint must open and close to ensure parallel bowing.	- Tension -- especially in the left shoulder.	- Always loosen the bow before putting it away.
	- Height of the scroll is in line with your mouth.	- Raise and lower your arm for string crossings.	- Poor tuning.	- Replace strings and horsehair once a year.
	- There should be a straight line from elbow to pinky.	- Wood away.	- Collapsed fingers on the left hand.	- Apply rosin to horsehair before playing.
Viola	- Fingers should be rounded over the fingerboard.		- Fingernails are too long.	
	- Begin in "rest position" with the instrument under your right arm, being careful not to press on the bridge.	- Index finger rests between first two joints on the grip of the bow.	- Bent/collapsed left wrist.	- Always wipe down the instrument and stick of bow after playing.
	- Curve your left hand around the bout of the instrument.	- Second finger touches the silver.	- Gripping the neck.	- Tune from below the pitch to avoid snapping a string.
	- Outstretch your left arm, flip the instrument upside down, and bring it to your left shoulder.	- Third finger should rest near the eye of the frog.	- Sliding/unparallel bow.	- Open case on a flat surface.
	- Turn your head slightly to the left and place your jaw on the chin rest.	- The pinky should be relaxed and placed on top of the stick. (Tap it to ensure flexibility.)	- Playing too close to the bridge or fingerboard.	- Avoid pressing on the bridge.
	- Nose, fingerboard, and left foot should be aligned.	- Thumb rests on the stick between the grip and the frog. Make sure it is bent!	- Straight thumb and/or pinky on right hand.	- Avoid touching the horsehairs and the "highway."
	- Elbow is below the instrument.	- Elbow joint must open and close to ensure parallel bowing.	- Tension -- especially in the left shoulder.	- Always loosen the bow before putting it away.
	- Height of the scroll is in line with your mouth.	- Raise and lower your arm for string crossings.	- Poor tuning.	- Replace strings and horsehair once a year.
Cello	- There should be a straight line from elbow to pinky.	- Wood away.	- Collapsed fingers on the left hand.	- Apply rosin to horsehair before playing.
	- Fingers should be rounded over the fingerboard.		- Fingernails are too long.	
	- Place the instrument to be centered with your body.	- Thumb is slightly bent, resting on the stick between the grip and the frog.	- Bent/collapsed left wrist.	- Always wipe down the instrument and stick of bow after playing.
	- While standing, the scroll should line up with your nose.	- Fingers rest over the frog, slightly spaced -- including the pinky.	- Legs bent/not planted on the ground.	- Tune from below the pitch to avoid snapping a string.
	- Adjust the endpin so it is at a 45 degree angle to the ground.	- Wood faces you.	- Sliding/unparallel bow.	- Open case on a flat surface.
	- Three points of contact: sternum, right leg, left leg (above the knee).	- Elbow joint must open and close to ensure parallel bowing.	- Playing too close to the bridge or fingerboard.	- Avoid pressing on the bridge.
	- There should be a straight line from elbow to pinky.	- Raise and lower your arm for string crossings.	- Straight thumb on right hand.	- Avoid touching the horsehairs and the "highway."
	- Left hand makes a C shape.		- Tension anywhere.	- Always loosen the bow before putting it away.
Bass	- Thumb is curved and placed behind the middle finger.		- Poor tuning.	- Rest the instrument on its side.
	- Fingers should be rounded over the fingerboard.		- Collapsed fingers on the left hand.	- Replace strings and horsehair once a year.
	- Fingers are dropped from the base knuckles. Do not squeeze!		- Fingernails are too long.	- Apply rosin to horsehair before playing.
	- Upper bout fits in the left side of the stomach near the hip.	- Thumb is slightly bent.	- Bent/collapsed left wrist.	- Always wipe down the instrument and stick of bow after playing.

	- Sitting on a stool: right leg on the floor, left leg rests on the first rim of the stool.	- Fingers rest over the frog, slightly spaced -- including the pinky.	- Legs bent/not planted on the ground.	- Tune from below the pitch to avoid snapping a string.
	- Left hand first finger should be eye level.	- French: similar to cello; fingers will be slightly more over the side of the frog.	- Sliding/unparallel bow.	- Open case on a flat surface.
	- There should be a straight line from elbow to pinky.	- German: index finger and thumb form a circle and rest on top of the stick. Second and third fingers rest between the stick and horsehair. Fourth finger is under the frog for support.	- Playing too close to the bridge or fingerboard.	- Avoid pressing on the bridge.
	- Left hand makes a C shape.	- Wood faces you	- Straight thumb on right hand.	- Avoid touching the horsehairs and the "highway."
	- Thumb is bent and tip rests on the neck of the bass (behind the second finger).	- Elbow joint must open and close to ensure parallel bowing.	- Tension anywhere.	- Always loosen the bow before putting it away.
	- Fingers should be rounded over the fingerboard.	- Raise and lower your arm for string crossings.	- Poor tuning.	- Rest the instrument on its side or upright in a corner with the strings facing the wall.
	- Fingers are dropped from the base knuckles. Do not squeeze!		- Collapsed fingers on the left hand.	- Replace strings and horsehair once a year.
	- When using your fourth finger, all of your other fingers should be on the string as well.		- Fingernails are too long.	- Apply rosin to horsehair before playing.