

Upper Strings Bootcamp



*Keep your Violins and Violas
in Great Playing Shape!*

**Nicole DeGuire, Associate Director of Orchestras
Carmel High School**

About Me...

- Associate Director of Orchestras; Carmel High School (Carmel, IN)
- President-Elect; Indiana ASTA
- Indiana All-State Orchestra Coordinator
- ISSMA State Board Member
- Former Director of Orchestras; Fishers High School (Fishers, IN)
- Freelance Violinist
- MM; The Eastman School of Music (Violin Performance & Literature)
- Orchestral Studies Diploma; The Eastman School of Music
- BM; Butler University (Violin Performance)

Why is Position So Important?

Position will have an affect on the following:

- intonation
- articulation
- tone
- dynamics
- phrasing



It's not just about the notes...

Set-Up/Position

Things that can affect position:

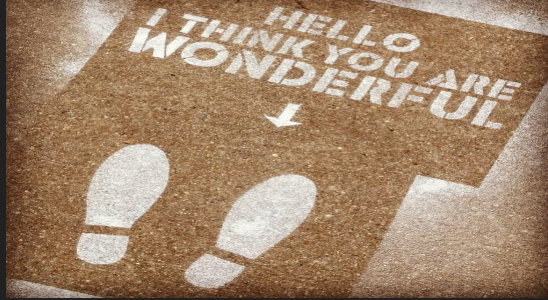
- Transitioning from middle school to high school (or another level)
- Summer
- A pandemic
- Physical attributes
- Anything



Great posture, position and set-up lead to great playing!

STANDING

(Start from the Ground Up)



- Stand up nice and tall, with shoulders down and relaxed
- Put your feet together and make a “V”
- Take a small step out (approximately shoulder width apart)
- Bend your knees! Keep them bent...no locked knees!
- Sway like a tree in the breeze

STEPS TO A GREAT POSITION

- Punch it out
- Statue of Liberty
- Finger to end button
- Align with ear
- Bring it down onto your shoulder
- Elbow under/at the side, but not touching the side
- Make a “J” shape; pinky bone goes straight into your arm, straight into your elbow and into the floor
- Thumb; just peeks over the fingerboard/knuckle serves as a tiny shelf

Things to Keep in Mind...

- Think more jaw in the chinrest rather than chin
- The instrument does NOT grow out of the center of your neck
- No pancake hands
- Cheeks do NOT go into the chinrest....you're not taking a nap
- Relax! Can you do the magic trick? (holding the instrument with no tension and just your jaw/shoulder)



Magic Trick!

- Jaw should be placed in chinrest gently
- Shoulders should be down and relaxed
- Instrument is balanced, and hand can be at the upper bout



Carefully, release your hand from the bout...don't drop your instrument!
Can you wave at your teacher? Can you wave at the person next to you?

To Shoulder Rest or Not to Shoulder Rest?

That is the question...



HAVE A SEAT

- Feet should be flat on the floor and still shoulder width apart
- Sit closer to the front of the chair
- Sitting up nice and tall, with shoulders down and relaxed
- Feet should be out in front/left foot can be slightly more in front
- You should be able to stand up without making a sound, or having to adjust your chair



My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean

My Bonnie lies over the ocean

My Bonnie lies over the sea

My bonnie lies over the ocean

Please bring back my Bonnie to me



Bring back, bring back, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me

Bring back, bring back, bring back my Bonnie to me

My Bonnie lies over the ocean

My Bonnie lies over the sea

My Bonnie lies over the ocean

Please bring back my Bonnie to me



BOW

1. Tap middle finger to thumb
2. Make an “O “ shape...can you see through?
3. No banana thumb
4. Gentle “knock”
5. Put your knuckles away
6. Plant your thumb at the thumb patch/keep knuckle out



Let's Exercise!

1. Windshield Wipers
2. Stir Soup
3. Be a Unicorn
4. Rockets
5. Circles on the Ceiling
6. Creepy Crawlies
7. Bow Push-ups
8. Bow Push-ups on the violin/viola
9. Pivots (on instrument at the frog)
10. Holding the stick of the bow with your helper hand (left hand)
create a pulling and pushing motion with your fingers



Ways to Apply/Check Positions & Set-Up

- Open Strings (Call/Response style)
- Finger Patterns (Call/Response style)
- One octave scale
- Simple review lines out of your favorite method book
- Review a few measures from a simple piece in the past

**Consider picking something simple for this*





Nicole DeGuire

Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have, or to share your tips and tricks with me!

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Special Thanks...



Paige's Music and Encore Orchestral Strings

Tim Dawson, Tom May and John Rihani

Carmel Clay Schools

Dr. Michael Beresford, Superintendent

Dr. Tom Harmas, Carmel High School Principal

Mr. Chris Kreke, Carmel High School Performing Arts Department Chair

