

Strategies for Improving Playing Position & Flexibility In Your Orchestra Students

Pamela Tellejohn Hayes
The Midwest Clinic
December 16, 2015

Instrument Hold

- The student slumps forward to hold the instrument.
- The angle of the instrument is too far to the left or right.
- The head pinches the violin or viola to support it.
- The scroll of the violin or viola slants downward.

Left Hand

- The left hand is squeezing the neck.
- The finger angle is incorrect.
- The violin or viola wrist is collapsed.

Right Hand

- The thumb is straight and/or in the frog's mouth.
- The pinkie is straight.
- The first finger is over the stick of the bow too far.
- The middle fingers stay on top of the bow stick.
- The shoulder is raised.
- The elbow is too high.
- The student is squeezing the bow too hard.
- The wrist is locked.
- The elbow is locked.
- The bow is crooked.
- The bow only "saws."
- The fingers on the bow hand are locked.

General Tips

- Model acceptable position for all instruments.
- Provide students and parents with resources to reinforce skills taught in the classroom such as essentialelementsinteractive.com
- Compare the right way to the wrong way. Do not be afraid to exaggerate.
- Set up a system of reminders to incorporate your objectives into various musical examples.
- Get off the podium, even in advanced orchestras.
- Make sure the students know that you will not give up.

Many of the ideas presented were adapted from concepts learned while studying with the late Paul Rolland.