

Playing Without Pain: Physical Exercises for Dexterity, Flexibility, and Relaxation

Correct playing positions and warm-up exercises can help your string students achieve better posture, left-hand position, finger dexterity, finger patterns, and bow hold/stroke. The set-up of each instrument/bow will be discussed. Physical exercises will be demonstrated to develop good body posture and relaxation, independence of arms, finger dexterity, left-hand finger patterns, and bow hold/stroke development.

Kathleen DeBerry Brungard, Presenter

Left Side Tension / Pain / Injuries: Awkward Body Posture / Poor Playing Position

- Incorrect Instrument Size
- Poor Support of the Instrument
- Underused Back Muscles / Rounded Shoulders
- Neck / Head: Tilts; "Chin" Rest on Violin/Viola
- Improper Standing Posture
- Improper Seated Posture
- Elbow: Static
- Wrist: Collapsed or Hyper-extended
- Fingers / Thumb: Rigid Joints; Hyper-mobility; Extended 4th Finger; Collapsed Thumb Web

Establishing Good Posture

Perfect Posture!

Upper Body Exercises for Relaxation, Flexibility, and Independence of Arms / Wrists

- Waves
- Dueling Hands
- Orchestra Stretches 1 and 2

Shaping the Left Hand : Finger Pattern Development, Finger Dexterity, Finger Independence

- Finger Pattern Drill
- Finger Pattern Sit-ups
- Finger Twister Games
- Left Hand Strumming
- Left Hand Pizzicato
- Fingerboard Sliding
- Fingerboard Tapping

Right Side Tension / Pain / Injuries

- Fingers / Thumb:
 - Incorrect Hold
 - Rigid Joints
- Wrist Inflexible
- Elbow Locked

Shaping the Right Wrist / Arm: Bow Stroke Path, Flexibility of Wrist, Shaping of Thumb

- Penny Push-ups
- Ping-Pong

Shaping the Bow Hold

- Bow Hold on Pencil
 - Palm Up
 - Thumb Curved
 - All Fingers Curved and Relaxed

Exercises for Right Finger and Thumb Flexibility, Bow Stroke Path

Bow Taps
Thumb Flex
Bow Motion Game

Transfer of Bow Hold to Bow

Shadow Bowing Using Tubes and Open Strings

Implications for Both Hands

Left Hand

Better Left Hand Shaping
Finger Strength and Flexibility
Better Intonation
Finger Pattern Recognition for New Keys
Foreshadows Shifting

Right Hand

Flexible Fingers / Thumb in Bow Hold
Relaxed Wrist and Elbow Motion
Better Tone Quality
Set-up to Perform a Variety of Bowings
Extended, Full Bow Stroke

Daily Warm-ups to Music

Daily Prescribed Warm-ups Featuring:
Full Body Stretches and Balance
Left Hand Shaping, Strengthening, and Flexibility
Right Hand Shaping and Flexibility

All Warm-ups and Exercises may be found in:

Orchestra Expressions Books I and II

Authors: Kathleen DeBerry Brungard, Michael L. Alexander, Gerald E. Anderson, Sandra Dackow
Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.