STRING CARE

Replace strings one at a time so that the soundpost does not fall. Observe how the string is wound before removing it. Wind the new string towards the peg handle. Strings will break from friction if wound tightly against the wood sidewall. Graphite or soft pencil lead may be applied sparingly to the string grooves in the nut and bridge to smooth the movement of the strings.

Most student-line instruments come equipped with metal "tuners" or "adjusters" on the tailpiece. Individual strings are tuned upwards by turning the tuner knob in a clockwise direction, thereby increasing string tension. There is a limit to how often this can be done, as the screw loses adjustability in its lower position, and may even damage the surface of the instrument. When the screw is near its lower limit, it needs to be raised (reversed) fully to its upper position, and the string must be tuned with its peg only. Then the tuner will again be of use. Gut or synthetic core strings do not work well with tuners, and instruments with these strings may only have a tuner on the highest string.

CARING FOR BOWS

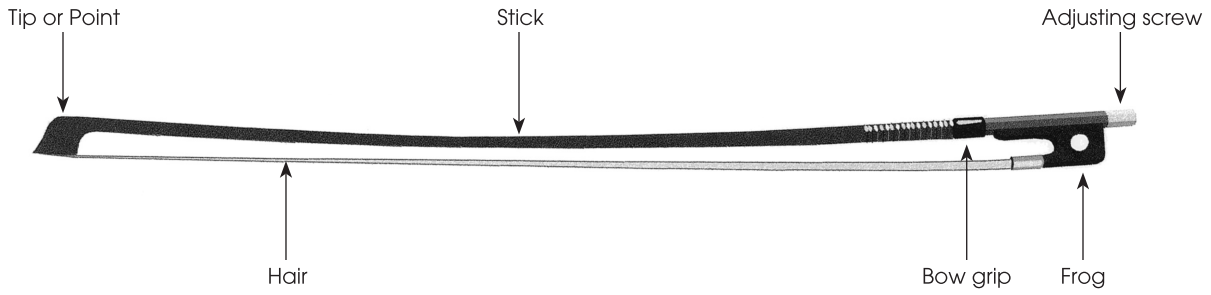
Loosen the bow hair when the bow is not being used. This is the single most important thing you can do for your bow. Loosening the hair is done to keep the bow from warping. A warped bow hinders phrasing and articulation. Before playing, tighten the bow to a moderate tension so that the curve of the stick remains concave. Then rosin the bow hair by holding the rosin cake in the left hand, and running the horsehair over the cake from the frog to the tip of the bow and back again.

Never touch the bow hair with your hands. Perspiration, dirt, grease, and oily substances from fingertips prevent bow hair from taking and holding the rosin. Bows are fragile and should always be stored in the case when not in use.

GENERAL CARE

When the instrument is not being played it should be kept in its case to prevent dust from collecting or prevent damage from accidental dropping or bumping. Cellos and basses should be set down on their sides, never lean them on chairs or against a car. If at any time you feel the instrument needs repair, bring it to Meyer Music for proper care and adjustment. Delicate instruments deserve professional attention.

PARTS OF THE BOW



Care and Maintenance of String Instruments

MEYER music

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HOLLAND
675 East Lakewood, 49424
(616) 396-6583

MUSKEGON
1664 East Sternberg, 49444
(231) 865-7000

INSTRUMENT CARE

Temperature. String instruments are the most delicate of all musical instruments, since the quality woods used in their construction continue to behave like living material. They will expand and contract slightly with temperature and humidity changes. Sudden changes in temperature, such as bringing a cold instrument into a heated room, can cause severe damage to the wood and finish of a string instrument. Place your instrument away from heaters and keep it from getting too cold. Keep instruments away from radiators, hot air registers, and air conditioners. If it gets too cold in winter transit, leave it closed in the case and let it warm gradually.

Humidity. Humidity seriously affects the wood, glue, strings, and metals of string instruments. High relative humidity (dampness) swells wood, lowers the fingerboard (leaving the bridge too high), and lengthens bow hair. In extreme cases, wood may warp and become unglued. Low relative humidity (dryness) dehydrates woods and gut strings causing wood to crack and strings to break. It also raises the fingerboard (leaving the bridge too low) and shortens the bow hair. Store your instrument away from damp basements or hot attics.

A small sponge humidifier (such as the "Dampit" brand) may be of help in caring for string instruments during dry winter months.

Cleaning. A soft, napless cloth may be used to remove rosin, moisture, and finger marks from the instrument and bow stick. Use the cloth after every practice and playing session. Never use alcohol or hot water to clean as they may dissolve or damage varnish. Seek the assistance of a qualified technician for help with the removal of rosin build-up.

PARTS OF THE VIOLIN

Bridge. The bridge needs adjustment periodically, as tuning of the strings tends to tilt it toward the fingerboard. Occasionally check its angle, and if necessary, push the top of the bridge slightly back the other way. If done regularly it will help prevent bridges from becoming bent, collapsing or warping. The bridge should be positioned between the inside notches of the F-holes. The low side of the bridge is under the "E" string on the violin, the "A" string on the viola and cello, and the "G" string on the bass.

Pegs. Each peg is individually fitted. Pegs are not interchangeable, not even on the same instrument. When tuning with pegs, the hand motion is both a turning motion and a subtle pushing inward, to "set" the peg in the hole. Pegs tend to stick in summer and slip in winter. Peg compound or drops will often help this problem.