

CARE OF THE VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO OR BASS

THESE ARE THINGS YOU CAN DO

Regular attention to the following details will help keep your stringed instrument in the best playing condition.



PROTECTION

Always keep your instrument and bow in its case or bag when it is not in use. Make sure the bow hair has been loosened before putting the bow in the proper protective compartment.

TEMPERATURE

Never expose the instrument to direct sunlight or sudden changes in temperature or humidity. When not in use, store in a place with moderate humidity, away from radiators or hot air vents. Never leave an instrument in a car.

HUMIDITY

Stringed instruments need at least 50% relative humidity to maintain their adjustments and integrity. Use a DAMPIT[®] to insure that sudden changes in humidity do not crack your instrument or cause it to go out of adjustment. The DAMPIT[®] should be remoistened daily whenever the heat is on in your house, especially during the winter months. Case-mounted humidifiers are not a substitute for a DAMPIT[®]. Additionally, we recommend the use of steam vaporizers in the music room for added protection during the dry season.

CLEANING

Rosin dust should be removed immediately after each playing. Use a Potter Violin's microfiber cleaning cloth to wipe down the strings and the body of your instrument after every playing session. Periodic polishing with Potter Violin's polish will help maintain the luster. **DO NOT USE ALCOHOL.** It is a solvent and can damage the varnish.

THE BOW

A fresh hank of bow hair can be expected to last for just 120 playing hours. This means your bow should be rehired once every six months if you play half an hour a day, five days a week. Loosen the bow when not in use. Keep polish and fingers away from the bow hair.

CHINREST

If the chinrest is loose or touching the tailpiece, it may cause a buzzing sound. Insert a chinrest key into the small hole in each chinrest bracket barrel and turn clockwise to tighten just enough so that the chinrest is firmly secured. Take care not to push the key out the opposite side of the barrel so that it scratches your instrument.

PEGS

Even normal tuning will cause both the peg and the peg hole to wear smooth. This causes slipping. To give the peg more grip, apply ordinary Lava brand soap (dry) against the peg shafts where they have become polished or shiny. When peg become seriously worn see your repairman.

THE BRIDGE

The feet of the bridge should always be aligned with the inner notches cut in the F holes. It must be kept in a perpendicular position. Tuning the strings tends to pull it forward. Check its position frequently. If neglected, the bridge may warp, even break. If it requires adjusting, grasp the bridge at both upper corners with the thumb and first fingers of each hand while holding the instrument firmly braced. Then gently move the top of the bridge to a perpendicular position. You may also ask your instructor to do this for you.

STRINGS

Even the finest instrument cannot sound its best with old or poor quality strings. Strings will usually deteriorate long before they break. We recommend changing strings every six months in conjunction with the bow repair. Look for changes in the appearance of the surface of the strings. By regularly examining the windings for changes in texture and color you soon learn the signs that your old strings are becoming lifeless, false and dull. Check your Potter Violins maintenance and warranty brochure to be sure you replace your strings with the same type that is currently on your instrument so that you don't jeopardize the soundpost adjustment. Put new strings on one at a time. Guard against the bridge being pulled forward while tuning new strings up to pitch. Avoid using low-priced steel strings if you have a high quality instrument.

STRING TUNERS

If your tuner has a lever under the tailpiece, guard against the lever touching the top of the instrument as this can seriously bruise the wood. To reduce the depression of the lever, merely turn the tuner screw to the LEFT (counter clockwise), then raise the pitch with the peg. If you wish to use more than one fine tuner, consider having us install a Wittner tailpiece. This has built-in tuners for ease of tuning and changing strings.

MAINTENANCE OF THE VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO OR BASS

THINGS TO BE DONE ONLY BY YOUR REPAIRMAN

Please refer to our Repair Price Guide for more information on service costs for instruments and bows.

FINGERBOARD

Do not let grooves develop under the strings. Grooves prohibit free vibration of the strings. Be sure the board has a sufficient concave dip. See your repairman who can check the grooves in the nut; they might be worn too deep.

SUMMER/WINTER BRIDGE

In warm weather the top of the instrument swells upward. This raises the bridge and lifts the strings too high above the fingerboard for comfortable playing. A lower bridge is required. In cold weather, the top is at its lowest level and a higher bridge is required. Otherwise the strings will be too close to the fingerboard to permit free vibration. See your repairman.

SOUNDPOST

If the post was fit during cold weather, it may be too short for summer when the top rises. Conversely, if it was fit in warm weather, it may be too long for winter when the top subsides. Unless the post fits properly, the tone will be disturbed. If it falls or moves, loosen the string tension slightly and ask your teacher or repairman to reposition it.

OPEN EDGES

Check your instrument regularly to note whether the top or back has become unglued from the ribs at any point. If so, do not neglect this; see your repairman.

CRACKS

Check periodically for cracks, especially during cold, dry weather. Keep all polishes away from open cracks. Have your string repairman glue the cracks as soon as possible.