

Basic String Instrument Care

When you get out the instrument:

- When setting down a violin or viola, place the instrument on its back. Cellos should be laid on their side. *Never place an instrument face-down*, lying on the bridge.
- Always hold the bow at the bottom or by the stick only. *Do not* touch the bow hair.

Cleaning

- After it has been played, gently wipe along the length of the strings with a soft cotton cloth to remove any rosin dust, dirt or grease.
- The outside of the instrument can be cleaned using a duster – be very careful to not get the duster caught in the tuning pegs, bridge, or around the strings, as it can damage the instrument if it gets stuck.
- Don't use a commercial furniture polish, water or wood cleaner as these may cause damage.
- Take care not to put excess pressure on the strings, as they can break.

When you put away the instrument:

- Loosen the bow; failure to do this will warp the stick and wear out the bow hair faster.
- Remove the sponge or shoulder rest from violins and violas; failure to do this could cause the bridge to fall or even crush the instrument
- Always put away the instrument and bow when done practicing, making sure case is zipped/latched closed. Instruments stored safely are much less likely to suffer accidental damage.

In general:

- Never leave an instrument in an extreme environment. Rather than leaving your instrument in a car, even for a short period, *take the instrument inside with you, no matter where you are*. Excessive heat, cold, humidity, and dryness are all damaging to the wood string instruments are made of and the glue holding them together. They *will* crack, warp, and lose tone quality.
- Unless you have prior skill, consult your teacher before attempting to tune the instrument.

If you suspect a maintenance issue:

- Always notify your teacher before taking action, even for simple cleaning or broken strings. They will recommend the best next steps.
- Please *do not* attempt your own repairs.