



Strategies for Introducing and Developing Shifting

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Why Do We Need Upper Positions?

1. Addition of higher notes (highest string)
2. To make fingerings in some passages easier
3. To change the timbre

The Issues With Upper Positions

1. How to get there
2. How to map the fingerboard/re-wire the brain for new notes
3. How to map the fingerboard/re-wire the brain for old notes
4. Learning by ear
5. Learning by reading (deciding what position to use)
6. Bowing lane implications
7. String crossing implications
8. Moving is harder for upper strings but further for low strings
9. The half-steps get closer together the higher you go
10. As the left-hand moves up to the bridge so must the bow

Prerequisites

1. D Major tetra-chord
2. Finger independence
3. Releasable thumb
4. Ability to support the instrument without the left-hand

Left-hand Rote Activities - Releasing the Left-Hand Thumb and Moving

1. Strumming and tapping in first position
2. Strumming and tapping at block
3. Strumming and tapping up high
4. Strumming and tapping in various positions
5. Riding the rails between strings
6. Taps, shoots
7. Wiping dust off the strings
8. Knuckle Knocks
9. Flexible fingers
10. Tapping fingerboard, bout, etc.
11. Tunnel over A (G bass), slide on D string
12. Geminiani slides on all strings

Left-hand Harmonic Games

1. Find the harmonic
2. See how many harmonics you can find on your instrument
3. Knock the peg and find the harmonic
4. Sound effects – playing harmonics sliding up and down the string
5. Finding the octave harmonic with each finger



Aural Games

1. Finger substitutions – (Twinkle, 0000, 220-, 2222, 110-)
2. D scale with 1st finger – (0011, 1111, 0011, 1111)
3. D scale returning to D – (0011, 0011, 0011, 0011 etc)
4. Slip and slide – D scale – (01 slide 1 slide 1 etc.)
5. Slip and slide – D scale – (0110, 01 slide 2 0, 01 slide 3)
6. Tunes with 1 finger – (Twinkle, 0000, 110-, 1111, 110-)

Principles

1. If you squeeze and or grab the neck you will shift flat.
2. If you move too quickly you will shift sharp.
3. The fingerboard must be “mapped” mentally by using positions.
4. Positions are easier to conceptualize with hand frames.

Shifting

1. 3rd, 4th, 5th
2. 2nd, 4th, half
3. 6th, 7th,
4. Thumb, 8VA, treble clef, tenor clef

Vibrato

1. Preparing for vibrato
2. Arm vibrato
3. Hand vibrato

Resources

- Gillespie, R. and Phillips, R. (2008), *String Clinics to Go: Teaching Intermediate Skills DVD*.
- Phillips, R. and Moss, K. (2012), *Sound Innovations, Sound Development, Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique, Intermediate String Orchestra*
- Phillips, R. and Moss, K. (2013) *Sound Innovations, Sound Development, Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique, Advanced String Orchestra*
- Fischbach, G. and Frost, R. (1997) *Viva Vibrato!*
- Fischbach, G. (2002) *The Art of Vibrato DVD*
- Hopkins, M. *String Pedagogy Notebook*, [online.www.stringtechnique.com](http://www.stringtechnique.com)
- Kaminsky, J. (2005), *Vibrato from the Ground Up*.
- Villasurda, G. *String Skills*, www.stringskills.com, has intermediate and advanced shifting materials