

JAN HAMPTON VIOLINS
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TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY:

Always protect your instrument from extreme changes in temperature or humidity by:

1. Never leave the instrument in the car or trunk in hot or cold weather.
2. Use a case or home humidifier to keep the environment around the instrument moist in the winter.
3. Store your instrument in the case when not in use and keep the case away from radiators or hot air vents.

THE INSTRUMENT: Your teacher may put marker tapes on the fingerboard to help you know where to put your fingers. This is fine. **PLEASE DO NOT PLACE ANY STICKERS ON THE BODY OF THE INSTRUMENT.** This can damage the varnish and result in an expensive repair.

THE BRIDGE:

The bridge should be in line with the inner notches of the F-holes and should stand at a 90 degree angle to the top. Tuning tends to pull the bridge forward. If left in this position the bridge will warp, fall over or break. Ask your teacher to reposition the bridge or call your repair shop for help.

STRINGS:

Strings should be replaced at least once a year. Old strings sound dull while new strings will make your instrument sound fuller and livelier. Strings should be put on one at a time to prevent the bridge or sound post from moving or falling down. Whenever strings are changed, mark the grooves in the bridge and nut with some pencil lead to prolong the life of the strings. If you are just starting to play, it is best to have your teacher or someone at Jan Hampton Violins install the strings.

FINE TUNERS:

Make sure that the fine tuners on the tailpiece do not dig into the top of the instrument. This can cause scarring of the top or even cracking. It may also cause the instrument to buzz. If the fine tuners are touching the top, simply turn the screw to the left and then raise the pitch with the peg. Ask your instructor for help.

ATTENTION - BASS AND CELLO PLAYERS:

Never lean your instrument against the wall, even in a corner. It can slip and fall, and neck repairs are expensive! Store the instrument in a proper stand or lying on its side. When transporting a bass or cello there should be no pressure on the neck.

PEGS:

Beginning players should NOT try to tune with the pegs. The teacher will tune the instrument and learning to tune is part of what your teacher will show you eventually.

Pegs may stick or slip when there are significant changes in the weather. Normal wear from tuning can also contribute to the slipping of the pegs. Tuning with the pegs requires pushing in on the peg while turning it. Excessive pressure should not be necessary. If the peg slips, chalk can be put onto the peg by your teacher to help it grip. If the peg is

sticking, some dry “Lava” soap or “peg dope”, will help it turn smoothly. Again, these treatments should only be attempted by an experienced player. If the pegs are worn sufficiently so as to need refitting, bring the instrument in to the violin shop.

THE CASE:

Do not keep anything in your case next to the instrument. Shoulder rests stored in the case next to the instrument can cause severe damage to the instrument and the strings. If there is no compartment in your case large enough for the shoulder rest or sponge, it should be carried separately. If you have a shaped case, inexpensive clip on bags are available to hold the shoulder rest.

THE SEASONS AND YOUR BRIDGE AND SOUNDPOST:

Changes in temperature and humidity can cause changes in the height of your bridge. In summer the strings may become too high because the body of the instrument swells with the high humidity. In the winter the opposite may happen and the strings may be so low that there is buzzing of the strings on the fingerboard.

The sound post is affected also by these changes in the weather. If the post fits properly in the summer, it may be too tight in the winter and the instrument can sound thin and shrill. If the post is fit in the winter, it may be too loose in the summer and move around or fall down. **REPOSITIONING OF THE SOUNDPOST SHOULD ONLY BE DONE BY A VIOLIN SHOP REPAIR TECHNICIAN.**

CARE OF THE BOW

1. **LOOSEN THE BOW AFTER EACH PLAYING.** This means 5 to 6 turns of the bow screw. When properly loose, the hair should touch the stick. This will keep the hair from stretching out and is less stressful on the stick.
2. Do not touch the bow hair with your fingers. The hair will absorb the oil from your skin and not play properly on the strings.
3. If you have a wooden bow, remember, it is very fragile. Do not tap the bow on anything, lean on it ...etc.
4. Have the bow re-haired at least once a year, and more often if you play a lot.
5. Do not use too much rosin. You do not need to rosin the bow each time you play. Too much rosin causes the sound of the instrument to be harsh and grainy. If there is lots of rosin powder on the instrument after you play, or the bow hair looks really white, you are using too much.