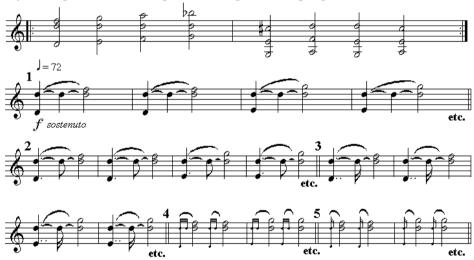
Chords: smooth pivoting

Pivoting is the movement of the bow *around* the string, i.e. at the same time as sustaining a stroke up or down on one string, pivoting gradually brings the bow closer to an adjacent string.

Pivoting is an example of *technical* timing as opposed to *musical* timing. (Musical timing is when you want the sound to begin, technical timing is often before. Gripping the string before a martelé is an example of technical timing, as opposed to the musical timing of actually playing the stroke.) To pivot smoothly, the bow must always begin to move towards the next string before you want to play it. The later the pivot, the faster it has to move. Smooth, well-timed pivoting is one of the most important aspects of bow technique, enabling seamless string crossings without accent or disturbance. Pivots are essential in chord playing, joining together the bottom and top half of the chord to create one, unbroken sound.

You can see clearly how smooth or sudden the pivot is by standing with the violin or viola at right-angles to a mirror.

Exercise 1. Play through the chord sequence using the five progressive variations.



Exercise 2. Play through the chord sequence using the eight progressive variations.



Next month's BASICS: a simple tone exercise that gives instant results, for all string instruments.