

# Soundpoint exercise

This exercise could not be more straightforward, and simply consists of playing continuous strokes on one note while at the same time moving the bow away from and towards the bridge. Although so simple, this type of one-note exercise at different distances from the bridge is one of the quickest and most effective ways to improve tone production. For the professional string player, exercises like this act as instantaneous warm-up exercises, while for the student or even the beginner, they offer the very quickest way to develop a beautiful tone. For most players, of every level of ability, the results are usually immediate and obvious.

<b>Soundpoint 1</b>	<b>Close to the bridge (slow and heavy)</b>
<b>Soundpoint 2</b>	<b>Between the bridge and the centre-point</b>
<b>Soundpoint 3</b>	<b>Centre, between the bridge and fingerboard</b>
<b>Soundpoint 4</b>	<b>Between the centre-point and fingerboard</b>
<b>Soundpoint 5</b>	<b>Close to the fingerboard (fast and light)</b>

The string is hard and inflexible near the bridge and the bow has to be drawn slowly and heavily. Near the fingerboard the string gives to the slightest pressure, and the bow has to be drawn quickly and lightly. There are naturally many exceptions and variations, but basically every sound that comes out of a string instrument is the result of a particular set of proportions of speed of bow to pressure to distance from the bridge.

## EXERCISE FOR ALL BOWED INSTRUMENTS

The exercise consists of three rows of musical notation, each with three measures. The notes are quarter notes on a single pitch. The first row starts with *mp* and ends with *f*. The second row starts with *ff* and ends with *ff*. The third row starts with *f* and ends with *mp*. The dynamic markings are placed below the notes.

Fast and light <i>mp</i> Soundpoint 5	Slightly slower and heavier <i>mf</i> Soundpoint 4	Slower and heavier <i>f</i> Soundpoint 3
Slower and heavier <i>ff</i> Soundpoint 2	Very slow and heavy <i>f</i> Soundpoint 1	Faster and lighter <i>ff</i> Soundpoint 2
Faster and lighter <i>f</i> Soundpoint 3	Faster and lighter <i>mf</i> Soundpoint 4	Fast and light <i>mp</i> Soundpoint 5

- 1 Play without vibrato. Begin at the point on soundpoint 5, using four or five inches of bow. Play sixteen or thirty-two strokes or more, moving the bow quickly and lightly.

Try more or less pressure, and faster or slower bow speed (ie more or less bow), to find which combination of speed and pressure makes the string vibrate the widest. Listen closely to the sound, which should be entirely pure and ringing all the time. Watch the string and notice how the slightest excess pressure makes it vibrate less, or how just a little less pressure or more bow may make it vibrate more.

Remaining at the point and without stopping the strokes, move to soundpoint 4 and again stay there until finding the combination of speed and pressure that makes the string vibrate the widest. Do the same on soundpoint 3, 2 and 1, and then 2, 3, 4 and 5 again. *Do not stop the strokes as you change soundpoint.* The speed will have to be very slow on soundpoint 1, and the pressure very heavy.

- 2 Repeat the whole routine using four or five inches in the middle of the bow, then again near the frog.
- 3 Repeat the whole routine using ten inches of bow in the upper half, at the middle, and in the lower half.

To stay on one soundpoint the bow must be exactly parallel to the bridge. Play notes on each string in various positions, but avoid open strings since they ring easily anyway. Also play double-stops.