

Moving the fingers from the base joint

Fingers, arms and legs all have three main 'levers'. In each the upper lever is the strongest and the lower lever the weakest. The following points correspond to each other:

- The shoulder - the hip - the base joint of the finger
- The elbow - the knee - the middle joint of the finger
- The wrist - the ankle - the nail joint of the finger

In the arms and legs, the strongest levers are the upper arm and upper leg. Broadly speaking, these levers carry out all the largest and strongest physical actions, moving from the shoulder and hip. Similarly, the main movement of the fingers is at the base joint, which is like the 'shoulder' of the finger.

Trying to move the fingers from the middle joint (the 'elbow' of the finger), or partly dropping them by moving the whole hand with the finger, badly reduces facility and is a major cause of tension.

Pull the finger back from the base joints without changing the shape of the finger. To see if the finger is moving from the base joint, without the violin simply hold the hand in playing position. Move each finger forward from the base joint and back again, one at a time. The hand should remain perfectly still.

Exercise 1

Hold the left hand in front of you in the shape of a loosely held fist - palm facing to the right, fingers touching together and rounded naturally. Keep the back of the hand and the forearm in a straight line (fig. 1a).

- 1 Pull the fingers back, very fast, to the position shown in fig. 1b. Keep the fingers curved.
- 2 Hold this position briefly and then push forward quickly back to the starting position (fig. 1a).
- 3 Wait again for a moment and then pull back again. Repeat several times.
 - Move the fingers as quickly, and as far, as possible.
 - Move the fingers only, not the hand and thumb.
 - Keep the back of the hand and the forearm in a straight line.
 - Keep the thumb still and relaxed when the fingers move.
 - Keep the space open between the base of the thumb and the first finger.

Fig. 1

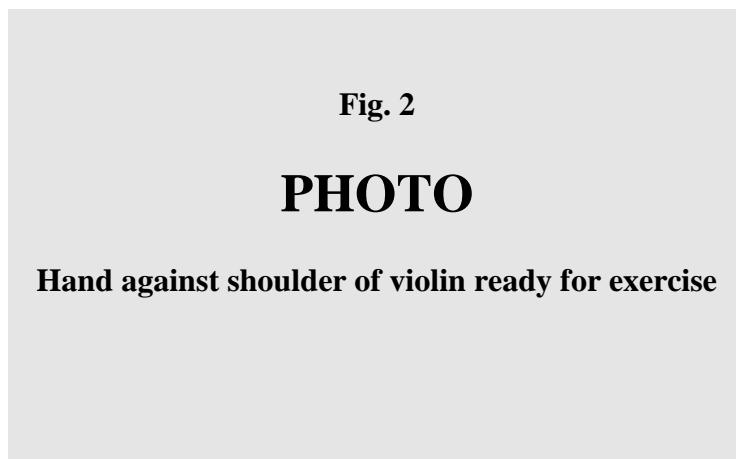
2 PHOTOS

- (a) Loosely held fist**
- (b) Having pulled back**

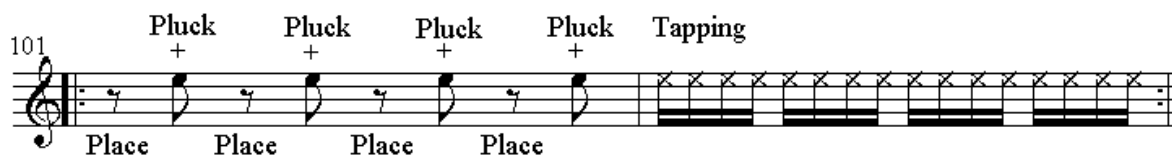
Exercise 2

Place the palm of the left hand flat against the shoulder of the violin (fig. 2). Specially position the hand for each finger, so that as each finger is used its base joint can sit just above the rim of the violin.

Move each finger from the base joint only, keeping the palm of the hand still and relaxed against the shoulder of the violin.



- 1 Pluck the open E string with each finger in turn. Pluck loudly, pulling the finger back as fast as possible. Move the finger rhythmically: place the finger - pluck - place - pluck, etc.
- 2 Go straight from plucking into tapping the finger up and down on the E string. Tap lightly and quickly in groups of fours, moving the finger 'down-down-down-down', not 'up-up-up-up'.



Exercise 3

- Hold three fingers down on the E string, and pluck the G and D strings with the other finger. Keep the forearm and the hand in a straight line, without sticking the wrist out.
- Pluck loudly, pulling the finger back from the base joint as fast as possible.
- Place the finger on the string - **wait** - pluck - **wait** - place - **wait** - pluck - **wait** - place, etc.

