

Smooth string crossings

To cross smoothly from one string to another, the bow has to start moving towards the new string while it is still playing the old string. This is a good example of technical timing as opposed to musical timing. Musical timing is *when* you want the note to sound; technical timing is always *before* the sound.

If the string crossing movement is made too late, so that the technical timing is almost the same as the musical timing, fast passages may feel unnecessarily awkward; slow, *legato* passages may contain unwanted accents.

You can easily improve string crossing passages by deliberately crossing too early. Play the note before the string crossing, and the note after it, as a double-stop. This is a simple but very effective practice method which can be used for a wide variety of different types of passage.

Example 1.

Sonata in A major, Op 47 (Kreutzer), Beethoven
First movement, bar 314

071

cresc.

Start slowly, keeping the bow deeply sustained in the string. Gradually speed up until near performance tempo.

072

f Sostenuto

Example 2.

Sonata in B \flat , K454, Mozart
Second movement, bar 50

074

cresc.

f

Example 3.

Concerto, Op. 64, Mendelssohn
First movement, bar 113

219

GD

220

Example 4.

Concerto, Op. 77, Brahms
First movement, bar 152

Example 5.

Concerto in D major, Op. 35, Tschaikowski
First movement, bar 107

Example 6.

Sonata in E minor, Op. 82, Elgar
First movement, figure 5