Releasing the left hand (1)

Play without the thumb

Rest the scroll of the violin against the wall or something that will hold it in place. Practise a phrase or passage without the thumb on the neck of the violin.

- Feel how the thumb, without any counterpressure into the neck of the violin, can remain entirely relaxed.
- Feel how the fingers, without counterpressure from the thumb, do not press into the strings. Instead of thumb counterpressure use a little arm weight, 'hanging' the arm from the fingers.
- Playing again with the thumb on the neck, keep the same feeling of non-gripping that you had when playing without the thumb.

Releasing the fourth finger

One secret of playing with a relaxed, strong and easy fourth finger is to forget about the fourth finger and concentrate on releasing the base joint of the first finger.





• At each '+' (just after each second finger, just before placing each fourth finger), release the base joint of the first finger.

Autumn (The Four Seasons), op. 8 no. 3, Vivaldi

Partita no. 2 in B minor, BWV1002, Bach

First movement

Releasing during open strings

The fingers should release when not being used, for example when there is an open string, rather than remaining in an active state.

Pause slightly while playing each open string and release the thumb, the base joints of the fingers, the muscles



Example

3

Example

2

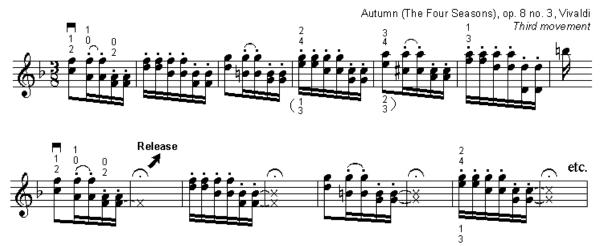
Example

- in the palm of the hand, the wrist, the upper arm, as well as any excess pressure into the chin rest.
- Playing on after each pause keep the same feeling of relaxation while playing the stopped notes.



Releasing between finger actions

Build moments of release into groups of notes, phrases and passages. The more moments of release the better.



- During the pause completely relax the hand and fingers, releasing the string as though playing a harmonic (shown as an x-note). Then play on.
- Playing without the pause make sure that there is a brief moment, between the same two notes, when you feel the same give and relaxation in the hand and fingers.



Example

5

Example

The trill in the third bar is often played as a turn.

• During the pause completely relax the hand and fingers, releasing the string slightly, and then play on:

