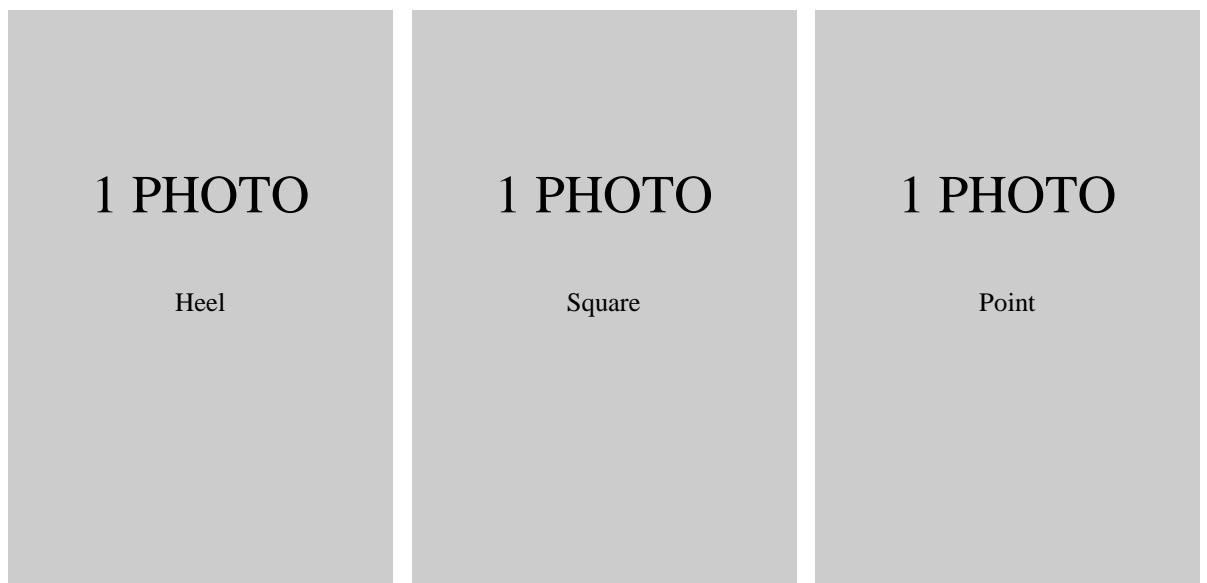

BASICS

Straight bow

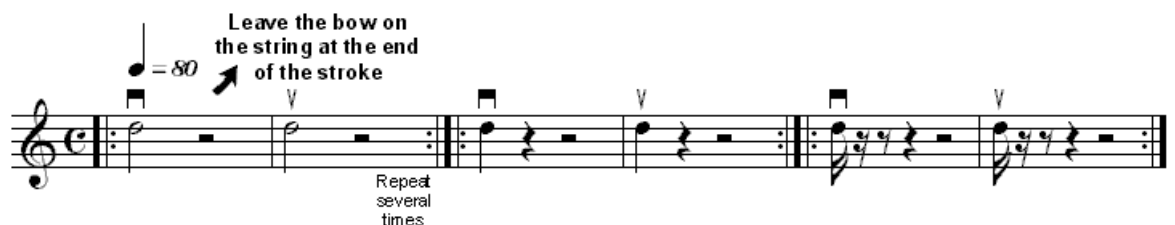
Before playing whole bows, divide the bow into two halves. First practise drawing a straight bow from the *heel to the square*, and then from the *square to the point*. Then put the two together for the whole bow.

The 'square' is the place in the bow where there is a right angle between the bow and the forearm, the forearm and the upper arm, and between an imaginary line drawn from the shoulder to the bow. Longer-armed players have the square higher up the bow, above the middle. Shorter-armed players have it lower down in the bow, directly at the middle.



The aim of the exercise is to use the arm, hand and fingers in such a way that the bow stays parallel to the bridge however fast each stroke. Play the following sequence in three areas of the bow:

- 1 Bow only between the heel and the square
- 2 Bow only between the square and the point
- 3 Play whole bows, from the heel to the point



Before playing each stroke, pause with the bow stationary on the string. Check in the mirror to see that the bow is exactly parallel with the bridge. Adjust the line of the bow with the fingers, hand or arm as necessary.

At the end of each stroke, pause with the bow on the string and see whether it is still straight with the bridge. A straight bow does not 'wander' towards or away from the bridge: the end of a stroke is at exactly the same distance from the bridge as the beginning of the stroke.

If the bow was not parallel to the bridge and the point of contact changed even slightly, decide what caused the bow not to be parallel: the movement of the upper arm? – the movement of the forearm? – the wrist? – the fingers holding the bow? – the thumb?

Then straighten the bow, play the next stroke, see whether the bow is parallel to the bridge, and so on.

Practise in the same way on the other strings as well. After only a short amount of work this simple exercise can bring an entirely new feeling of ease and reliability into the right arm.