
BASICS

Warming up shifting

Here is an excellent warm-up sequence for shifting. You can play it all in just four minutes from beginning to end. The sequence covers every basic shift which you might normally encounter in a piece, from any finger to any other. So by using this logical number sequence you can cover everything in one go.

Afterwards every shift in your playing feels more secure because of all the measuring you have done beforehand. As usual, the effects of the warm-up are accumulative, so you need to do it less and less often. In between you are left free to forget about shifting altogether and just concentrate on making music.

On different days do the exercise on the other strings. Also begin the sequence in other positions.

1

Single-finger shifts

This exercise is also a preparation for Exercise 2. There the intermediate notes (shown as x-notes) reveal how each shift from one finger to another is actually 1—1, 2—2, 3—3 or 4—4. Exercise 1 sensitises your hand and fingers to these shifts first, and then the two-finger shifts that contain one-finger shifts naturally feel more accurate.

1—1

2—2

3—3

4—4

2

Lower finger to higher

Play the x-notes with harmonic-like finger pressure, and barely any bow pressure. Play them as quavers at first. Gradually make them later and shorter, until they become barely audible grace notes.

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1—3

1—4

2—3

In this exercise play each shift twice, first as a 'beginning' shift (shifting with the finger you are already playing) and then as an 'end shift' (shifting with the new finger). In the first case shift up to the new position (x-note) and then place the new finger. In the second case place the finger lightly (even so light that you are actually not touching the string – shown as an x-note) and move up from there. (Sometimes the finger may extend a little first, making the x-note higher.)

2—4

The rule for co-ordinating the shift with the bow in separate-bow shifts is simple: if you shift on the old finger, shift on the old bow; if you shift on the new finger, shift on the new bow.

Also play the patterns with slurs across one or two bars, and add accidentals.

Higher finger to lower

2—1, 1—2

3—1, 1—3

