

Stringed Instrument Care and Maintenance

- Musical instruments are delicate and require careful handling
- Store instrument in the case or on a stand made to hold it and in a location where it will be safe (not stepped on or kicked by accident)
- Keep the instrument in a room that is used so that it is not at a different temperature from where it will be played
- Keep the instrument away from heat registers, heat/cooling vents, and windows to prevent changes in humidity
- Strings should be kept in tune, do not loosen them when putting the instrument away.
- If a string breaks, replace it quickly so that the same tension is maintained
- Do NOT remove all the strings at once as this will change the bridge and soundpost alignment
- Carry a soft cloth in the case and wipe the rosin dust off after the instrument has been used.
- Do NOT attempt to clean the violin yourself; varnish is delicate and can come off easily
- Do NOT put hand cream on your hands or face before playing the violin. DO wash your hands before playing.
- If pegs stick or slip have them looked at by a professional luthier (eg. Fine Strings www.finestrings.ca!)
- Be sure that you are gently pushing the peg in while tuning it.
- Watch the bridge – tuning the instrument causes it to lean forward, which can lead to it breaking. Pull the bridge back upright using 4 fingers and 2 thumbs for support.
- If the bridge breaks, the instrument will need a new one fitted by a luthier.
- If the instrument should fall or be knocked over, take it to a professional luthier to be checked over and fixed if necessary.
- If the bridge or soundpost should fall over, loosen the strings and take the instrument to a luthier to have it reset. The position of these is critical to the sound produced.
- Do NOT leave your instrument balanced on a chair while you go do something – this is like leaving an infant on a chair!
- BOW – adjusting the screw makes the hair tighter or looser. When playing, the hair should be moderately tight so that the stick still has a curve towards the hair.
- The bow hair MUST be loosened when not playing so there is no tension left on it or the stick. Keeping the hair tight when the bow is not in use will ruin the stick.
- Keep your fingers off the bow hair.
- Cleaning the bow hair on your own is not a good idea, if it is not working well anymore, take it to a luthier for a repair
- Do NOT eat and play your instrument at the same time.
- Be sure your case is fastened closed when you pick it up to carry it!
- Take the instrument and bow to a luthier at least once a year for a check-up (free at Fine Strings!)

Olivia Pelling is a professionally trained luthier who does high quality repairs, restorations, rehairs, has various instruments for sale and makes instruments on commission.

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