

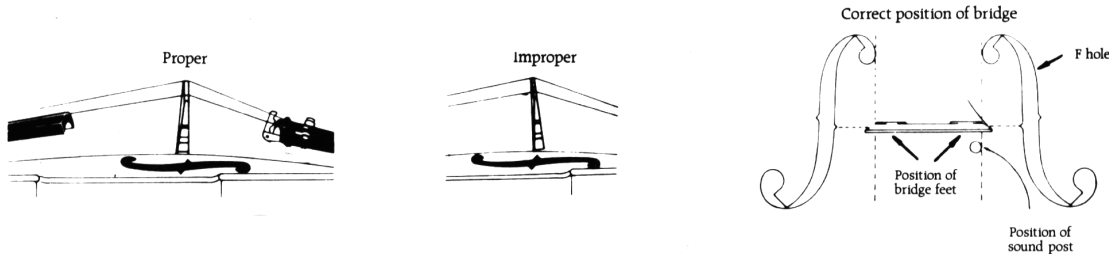
Robert Tice, Luthier

2503 Route 209 ~ Sciota, PA 18354
Phone 570-992-5695 ~ luthier@epix.net ~ RobertTice.com
"Praise Him with Stringed Instruments" Psalm 150:4

Information on Care of Bowed Instruments

Bridge:

The bridge should have a slight tilt toward the tailpiece as shown in the drawing on left.



Tuning the strings will move the top of the bridge, so this should be checked after each tuning. If it is leaning improperly, it should be gently adjusted back into place, otherwise, the bridge will warp, crack or fall over. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, ask a teacher or repairman if necessary. The third drawing shows the location of the bridge feet in relation to the f-shaped sound holes, in case the bridge is bumped from its proper position. The bridge should never be glued to the sound board.

Bow:

The bow needs to be tightened before playing. Take care to not over tighten so that the arch in the stick is removed. When correct, a pencil should be able to fit between the hair and bow-stick, but no more. Loosen all the tension from the hair each time when done playing, otherwise the hair will stretch out and the stick can warp or lose its camber (bow).

Avoid touching the bow hair on anything other than the strings. Dirt and oil on the fingers will stick to the rosin on the hair, lessening its effectiveness. Don't tap the bow on hard objects, or rest the end of the bow on the ground.

If a hair breaks, don't pull the loose ends of the hair from stick. This will cause other hairs to pull out of the bow ends. They should instead be trimmed carefully with cutters, watching that good hairs are not cut accidentally.

Pegs:

Tuning pegs will often loosen in dry, winter weather, due to shrinkage of the wood. The pegs are tapered, so this shrinkage can be compensated for by pushing the peg in while tuning. Sometimes the pegs will get too tight in the humid summers, and then have to be pulled out slightly while turning the peg. If your instrument has fine tuners on the tailpiece, these are normally used for tuning instead of the pegs. If the fine tuners are turned all the way down, so that the underside almost touches the sound board, have them backed off and then tune to approximate pitch with the friction pegs.

Strings:

Never over tighten the strings past the normal tuning pitch, or they may break. Use a tuner, preferably a chromatic electronic tuner, to guide. Don't loosen or replace more than one string at a time, or the internal sound post may come loose. When a string is removed, lubricate the grooves on the bridge and nut with the graphite from a pencil tip.

Shoulder Rest:

Be careful when installing the shoulder rest to not mar the finish. Gently slide it on sideways, not straight from the backside.

Cleaning:

With a soft flannel or cotton cloth, wipe the white rosin dust off the instrument and bow-stick after each playing session. Dampening the cloth with water or musical instrument polish may be required if dirt or rosin has built up.

Case:

Always keep the instrument in the case when not in use. Be sure to always secure the latches to keep the instrument from falling out. Set the case gently on the floor to avoid damaging the case feet or instrument. Do not store the shoulder rest next to, or papers under the instrument inside the case. This causes finish and neck damage.

Temperature & humidity:

Never leave the instrument in an unoccupied car or trunk. These extremes in temperatures & humidity can quickly damage the instrument. Direct sunlight on a black case can also cause overheating, as well as being too close to heaters.

The instrument should be kept in a humidified room or case during heating season, because of dryness, otherwise the pegs (and strings) will loosen, tops will sink down (and lower string clearance), fingerboards can warp, and cracks may develop in the instrument. An air-conditioned room is best during the summer to avoid swelling or warping of the wood from high humidity. A hygrometer should be used to monitor that relative humidity is 40-60%.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.