



Caring for your Orchestral String Instrument, Video Outline

Materials needed*:

Soft, untreated, non-abrasive cotton cloth | Humidifier for protection during winter | Rosin for bow hair

*Items are available at any REW Music store location

Instrument Case & Storage

- In general, if it's too hot or cold for you to be comfortable, it's probably too hot or cold for your instrument to be safe.
- Avoid extreme temperatures (above 80F and below 40F) and rapid temperature changes.
- Store your instrument away from heating and cooling vents, fireplaces, space heaters, and windows or doors that are open frequently.
- Avoid extreme humidity and dryness: too dry can cause the wood to crack, too humid can cause the wood to warp. (Some cases have a *hygrometer* gauge to measure the humidity level inside your case. 45% - 55% is ideal. We recommend using a *humidifier* designed for musical instruments in your case during the dry winter months to maintain humidity. We also have available year-round humidifier packs that maintain ideal humidity in all climates by absorbing excess moisture if the case is too humid or releasing moisture if the case is too dry.)

Handling Your Instrument

Pay careful attention to the Bridge & Sound Post:

- The bridge is not glued to the instrument body, but is held in place by pressure from the strings. Protect the bridge from being bumped and moved from its position. If bumped hard enough, the bridge will fall over or break.
- The sound post is a wooden rod located inside the instrument near the bridge and can be seen through the F-holes. It is also not glued in place, but is held there by pressure from the bridge. If the bridge moves or falls, the sound post may also move or fall. **DO NOT** play the instrument if the sound post has fallen. To avoid severe damage to the instrument, take it to the repair shop immediately.

The Bow:

- NEVER touch the horse hair part of your bow. The natural oils from your skin will coat the bow hair, causing the rosin not to stick.
- The bow must be tightened before you play and loosened before you put it back in the case. Leaving the bow tightened when not playing causes major damage over time.
- To use the rosin, lightly scratch the surface to create a fine powder. Run the bow hair up and down the rosin multiple times to coat the hair. A bow must be rosined to produce a good sound.

Cleaning:

- Using a soft, untreated, non-abrasive cotton cloth, wipe down the strings, fingerboard, bridge, tailpiece, and body of the instrument when you are done playing. This is to remove:
 - Oils produced naturally from your fingers and hands
 - Rosin and dust buildup can damage the finish of your instrument.
- Vacuum out your case regularly (without the instrument in it) to remove any dust, pet hair and small debris. Dust and rosin buildup can damage your instrument and dirty cases can attract bugs.

REMEMBER:

- Don't forget that string instruments are fragile! Do not drop your instrument.
- Treat your instrument and case with care: NEVER drag, kick, throw, or sit on the case.
- NEVER store your violin/viola in the case with the shoulder rest still attached.
- NEVER place any items in the case on top of the instrument (except an appropriate cloth "blanket").
- Don't store textbooks, excessive amounts of music, or other heavy items in the music pocket of your case – that will cause damage to your instrument!
- NEVER place your instrument in water.
- Keep your instrument out of reach of pets - dogs especially enjoy the taste of rosin and may also enjoy chewing up your instrument. That sort of damage is rarely-*if ever*-repairable - you don't want to have to replace your instrument.

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Click the Care & Maintenance link on the
homepage to watch the accompanying video

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