Bridge Set up Instructions (needed for our budget SAGA instruments ONLY):

"Belly" side should face toward the scroll.

Violin bridges have a flat side and a rounded ("belly") side. [See closeup photograph, above.] The "belly" side needs to face the scroll. Loosen the strings and set the feet of the bridge between the nicks in the F holes, with, as mentioned, the rounded side of the bridge facing the scroll and fingerboard. Make sure the bridge is straight up and down, at right angles to the top of the instrument, and not tilted in either direction. Please contact customer service if you experience any difficulties. We will be happy to help you.

Cleaning/Polishing and Removing Dust Bunnies

1. Never use any household products on an instrument; only use those products especially designed for violins. Rubbing alcohol and four-in-one oil are the only two exceptions I can think of; rubbing alcohol for the strings, and a tiny dab of oil on the bow screw if it's fussy. No Elmer's Glue, furniture polish, chemicals of any kind, varnish remover, etc.

2. Use a small amount of polish/cleaner and gently buff with a dry cloth until dry.

3. Let the instrument sit out for a while (out of its case), so it can air dry.

4. If you are going to use polish, don't polish over twice a year; in between times, just dust the instrument off with a clean, dry cloth after playing. Too much polish can lead to build-up and attracts dirt.

5. If you're not clear whether your violin has a French polish, test a tiny spot before using any product. Discontinue immediately if the area becomes sticky.

6. Don't let rosin, skin oils or dirt build up on the strings or the wood; the best way to keep the instrument clean is to wipe it off with a dry cloth after every playing session.

7. In the process of cleaning/polishing the instrument, if you see any cracks, take it to a luthier and have them repaired. Don't polish the instrument until this is done; polish in the cracks will interfere with the repair.

8. In the process of cleaning/polishing, make sure not to move the bridge or damage the f holes; take care that you don't snag your cleaning cloth on the intricate carving of the bridge.

9. If the instrument has a really thick build-up of rosin and dirt, you should take it to a luthier and have it cleaned.

10. Carefully shake the polish before using, and use a small amount, about the size of a small coin.

11. Fiddlebrite: A luthier told me that it's really not a polish, but a cleaner. And it may be used to clean the stick of the bow (don't get it on the hair), the violin wood, and the strings. It is appropriate for all so-called "student instruments," but you should not use it on expensive instruments with French varnish (which young beginners should not have anyway, in my opinion.) For very expensive instruments, you should use regular cleaner and polish, or better still, just dust the instrument and have it professionally cleaned periodically.

12. **Cautionary note:** Don't confuse Fiddlebrite with the regular cleaner and polish products. Fiddlebrite may be used to clean not only the wood, but the strings. Other products are designed *only for the wood of the instrument* (not the fingerboard, either, but the wood of the body of the instrument) and must not be used on violin strings.

13. An alternative way to clean violin strings, is to take a couple of clean, dry cloths, folded several thicknesses; place one, several thicknesses, on the violin wood directly under the "playing area" (the area between the end of the fingerboard and the bridge), and place another cloth, at least double thickness, on the fingerboard, between the fingerboard and the strings. Then take another clean, dry cloth and put just a tiny dab of rubbing alcohol on the tip of a corner of the cloth, and clean your strings with that. You must not get any of the alcohol on the wood of the violin, or on the fingerboard. Make sure that the cloths you use don't have soap or chemical residue on them. Using alcohol to clean the strings must be done very carefully, as any drop of alcohol on the wood may damage the wood permanently. I prefer using the Fiddlebrite. An additional alternative way to clean the strings is to use the cork from a wine bottle. I've never done this, but it's often mentioned.

14. The common way of removing dust bunnies from inside the violin is to put 1/2 cup of DRY uncooked rice in the f holes, and then turn the instrument upside down, and shake out the rice.

15. **Other issues:** when you take the violin out, check the strings to make sure they're not unraveling, make sure the bridge is sitting up straight, make sure the chin rest is not loose, make sure the fine tuners are not rattling. Don't forget to loosen the bow and remove the shoulder rest when you put the instrument away.

How do you change a violin or viola string, or restring a violin or viola?

If you're going to replace all the strings, I would not take them all off at once, but replace them one at a time, the outside strings first, then the inside. By doing them one at a time you can retain the placement of the bridge and also better avoid having the soundpost fall. It's also crucial that you put the strings in exactly the correct/same peg, and not change that. If the pegs are lower left, upper left, upper right, lower right, the violin strings need to be: G, D, A and E. Viola strings: C, G, D and A.

1. Carefully examine the strings and the way they are attached to your tailpiece and to the pegs in the peg box.
2. Remove the string.
3. Attach the new string to the tailpiece, either to the fine tuner or looping through the hole in the tailpiece, depending on the way it was before, if you're not changing the setup; the top string (E on violin) will normally always have a fine tuner; the other strings may or may not use a fine tuner. If you have a Wittner style tailpiece, all four fine tuners will be built in.
4. If you're changing the E (E on violin, A on viola), make sure the "doughnut"--the little either sleeve or black, doughnut shaped rubber ring--is going to be in place under the string when it crosses the bridge.
5. Pull the string towards the pegbox, and insert the tip of the string into the hole of the appropriate peg.
6. Turn the string in the direction away from you, if the violin or viola is facing you. As you turn the peg away from you, be sure that you wind the string against the side of the peg box. **Never force a peg; always turn it down (towards you) first, and then back up.** Again, make double sure that the strings are attached to the correct peg; otherwise they may cross each other and cause a problem, and the balance will be off.
7. Tighten it a bit but not too tight, get the pitch from a tuner or another violin, and tighten the string slightly higher than the prescribed pitch (so it can stretch).
8. Repeat this process on other strings you wish to change.
9. While doing this, you might also want to examine the nut to see that it's not too deep, or so rough that it may break the string, especially on the top string. If it needs smoothing, you may need to take it to a luthier to do that.
10. When you're through changing the strings I would tune the one(s) changed up slightly, and leave the instrument out (or with the case open, if you can), so the new string(s) can adjust more quickly. Before you play, you will of course tune carefully.

For assistance with:

    a. **How to protect the violin from extremes of temperature and humidity**
       http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#6

    b. **Categories of strings**
       http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#9

    c. **String sets**
       http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#string_sets

d. **Bridge set up**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#10

e. **Tuning instructions**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#11

f. **My pegs are not working right; how do I fix them?**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#12

g. **My chinrest came off; how can I fix it?**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#13

h. **My tailpiece came off; how can I fix it?**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#14

i. **Mutes**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/terms.html#mute

j. **Rosin**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#8

k. **Fingerboard tapes and pinky pads**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/PedagogyTech.html#33

l. **What on earth is a "Violin Hickey"?**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#16

m. **How do you change a violin or viola string?**
   http://beststudentviolins.com/StringCareSpecs.html#19

String Resources

- Accessories
- Amusements
- J.S. Bach: Music | Recordings | Books | Links
- Baroque Resources
- Bookstores
- Common String Articulations
- Discussion Lists
- Early History of the Violin
- Essays in String Pedagogy
- Errata in étude books
- Fraud against Music Teachers
- Free Handouts
- Free Music
- Guides
- Study Guide for Placement Tests
- Informal Surveys
- Internet Resources for Violin/Viola Students
- Music Books on Kindle
- Links
- Media
- Music Education
- Non-Traditional String Sounds
- Practice Books/Charts
- Professional Associations
- Public Domain Materials for Intermediate Violin and Viola Students
- Sound Files
- String Resources
- Teacher Resources
- Viola Resources
- Teachers Directory
- Violin/Viola FAQ
- Violinists/Violists on the Web

Essays in String Pedagogy

[Administration of Postsecondary Music Departments](#)

[Discussion: Careers in Music](#)

[Two Essays on the Development of Student Orchestras](#)

[MP3 Files: Tonality, Meter, String Articulations](#)

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[Elitism versus Popularism in Music Education](#)

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