

FLUIDITY IN MOTION:

WAYS TO GET THE STRING PLAYER'S RIGHT ARM MOVING

Dr. Melinda Crawford Perttu
Westminster College
New Wilmington, PA

THE LOCKED RIGHT ARM



ELEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

- Locked elbow
- Locked wrist
- Frozen fingers
- Motion from shoulder



ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

- Bow not parallel (which leads to...)
- Issues with Tone
 - Thin
 - Scratchy
 - Uneven
- Articulations & Phrasing
 - Will lack control
 - Driven by bow issues, not by music
 - Off-the-string strokes will be "grounded"
- Speed
 - Due to tension, faster bow speeds will be limited
 - Slower tempi will be pushed since less bow length will be comfortable to use



FUTURE PROBLEMS

- Off-the-string work
- Color changes
- Phrasing control
- Physical problems
 - Tendonitis
 - Carpel Tunnel
 - Shoulder pain – various causes
 - Back pain – various causes
 - Neck pain – various causes
- Desire to Quit
 - Can come at any time due to discomfort



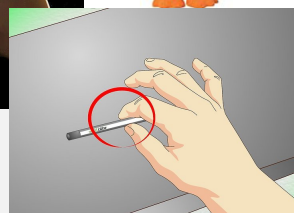
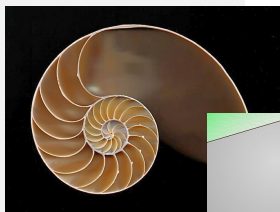
THE SOLUTIONS

1. Careful Preparation prior to Presentation of Bow Hold
2. Relaxed and Targeted Initial Presentation of Strokes

Take Your Time!!

PRIOR TO BOW WORK

- Arm motion warm-ups without holding anything
 - Chicken dance wings
 - Chambered Nautilus
- Warm-ups on pencils
 - Wiggle the pencil
 - Scratch your shoulder
 - Wrist “sit-ups”



INITIAL PRESENTATION OF STROKES (AFTER BOW HOLD)

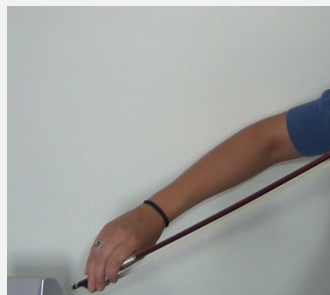
- Initial presentation of strokes (after bow hold)
 1. Short bow strokes
 2. Longer bow strokes
 3. Discuss how the joints work together

SHORT BOW STROKES

- Uses fingers, wrist, and **limited** elbow joints
- Make sure elbow is always on correct plane
- At balance point
 - Don't slow them down; keep speed
 - Focus on tone production
 - Focus on smooth articulations
 - Practice short stroke string changes
 - Imperative to future speed
 - REALLY works finger and wrist motion
 - Practice egg shape or circle in air

AT TIP

- Bow hand shape changes
- Elbow is open
- Collarbone is free
- Focus on tone production
- Focus on smooth articulations



AT FROG

- Bow hand shape changes
- Strong pinky on bow (violin & viola)
- Elbow is high (violin & viola)
- Focus on tone production
- Focus on smooth articulations



LONGER BOW STROKES

- Uses collarbone through fingers joints
- Continue practicing tip and frog short strokes
- Focus on consistent tone
- Focus on smooth articulations

CONTINUE TO ADDRESS BEYOND INITIAL PRESENTATION

(DON'T JUST ASSUME THAT THEY'VE GOT IT)

- Builds consistency
- Short bow stroke exercises make great warm-ups
 - Make sure to practice in different parts of the bow
- Discuss size of stroke and bow contact points relative to rhythm patterns

REMEDIATION

- Not fun! Try to prevent bad habits from forming in first place
- Short stroke exercises at tip and frog
- Make sure:
 - Ensure bow hold is correct and hand is flexible
 - Right elbow is high enough (violin/viola: at appropriate times)
- Fiddle tunes
 - Emphasize finger and wrist motion
 - Speed
 - Rapid string changes
 - More fun than exercises
- Prop up elbow when playing



QUESTIONS?

I'm happy to discuss this more!

Dr. Melinda Crawford Perttu

perttumh@westminster.edu