

HOLDING THE BOW

Take the bow in the left hand, and hold at the extreme end below the frog, in such a position that the hair is facing up and the tip of the bow is pointing away from you (Fig. III). (1) Place the TIP of the thumb (right hand) slightly curved at the joint, against the stick so that it touches the raised part of the frog on the stick (Fig. III and IV). (2) Allow the middle finger to curve around the stick at the first joint (from the tip) opposite the thumb. (3) Place the third, or ring finger, next to the middle finger so that it curves around the stick at the first joint, and rests against the side of the frog. (4) Allow the first finger to rest on the stick in the first joint. (5) The tip of the little finger rests on the stick in a natural position. Release the left hand. The fingers should be close together (Fig. V and VI).

The bow is controlled by the first three fingers and the thumb.

The bow hair for playing should be tightened so that it is about a quarter of an inch away from the stick at the center of the bow. Always loosen the hair when not playing.



Fig. III



Fig. IV
Showing position of bow stick in relation to fingers



Fig. V



Fig. VI

SILENT EXERCISES FOR THE BOW



Fig. VII
Position of bow while playing at the tip

With the 'cello in position, place the bow on the A string at different points, i.e., at the middle, tip, and frog. At each point hold the bow perfectly still for 2 minutes. Take notice of the position of arm, wrist, etc. as follows. The bow must always be at right angles to the strings, i.e., parallel with the bridge, and midway between the fingerboard and bridge. When the bow is at the point, the wrist should be sunk in (very slightly) and when at the frog, should be curved up (not too much). The hand is always in the same relative position to the bow. Do not allow the fingers to move on the bow stick. When placing the bow on the strings, the stick is turned slightly towards the fingerboard, so that only the edge of the hair touches the strings. This rule varies according to the dynamic effect desired. Practice this on all strings.



Fig. VIII
Position of bow while playing at the frog

Notice that the elbow is slightly higher when playing on the A and D strings, but never should the elbow be higher than the hand. Raise the hand to the level of the string desired, keeping the elbow entirely relaxed. Any exertion of the upper arm muscles is very harmful to a good tone (Fig. VII and VIII).

SIGNS AND ABBREVIATIONS FOR BOWING

▣ means Down Bow W.B. means Whole Bow
 ▽ means Up Bow M.H. means Middle half of Bow

