



**LEARN TO PLAY**

# *Violin*

**10 LESSON VIOLIN BEGINNER COURSE**

**ZLATA M A BROUWER**

*Playing the violin beautifully is  
a set of learnable skills*  
**I'm here to teach you exactly how**

# Welcome

Congratulations on picking up this beautiful, but sensitive and difficult instrument... the violin! In this free beginner course, you're in the right place to learn the basics.

My name is Zlata Brouwer, violin teacher specialized in bowing technique and creator of [Violin Lounge TV](#) and [Bow like a Pro](#).

In my private violin studio in Holland I've taught beginner students of all ages and backgrounds for over ten years. During these years I developed the quickest and easiest step by step way to master the basics of violin playing.

In this course I'll help you in the best way possible to get started playing the violin, but please know that it will take many years of daily practice, lessons, dedication, love and patience to learn to play the violin beautifully. Enjoy this course!

Love,



PS: Questions? Post them in the comments underneath the applicable video on YouTube [right here](#).

PPS: [Click here](#) for my recommendations for a decent and inexpensive beginner violin.



# Lesson 1: Violin Hold



- Hold the violin in front of you with the scroll to the left
- Lift the violin above your head
- Point the scroll to the front left
- Slide the violin with the chinrest side along your cheek
- Put the violin on your shoulder
- Let the violin rest in balance on your collarbone/chest



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## Extra tips:

- Don't have the scroll too high like you are shooting birds in the air
- Don't have the scroll too low like you are shooting mice on the ground
- The violin rests 50% on your collar bone and 50% in your left hand. You shouldn't squeeze your violin with your chin and shoulder. The risk of injury is very high. Besides that it's better for your intonation (playing in tune) if your violin rests partially in your left hand.
- Your left wrist is straight and your left elbow points to the floor. Your left arm is relaxed and dangles under the violin.
- Experiment with different chinrests, shoulder rests, cushions or nothing at all to discover what is best for you. There's no one stop solution for everybody.

## Lesson 2: Bow Hold



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### Tips:

- all fingers round (curved)
- wrist and knuckles low (in a straight line from your arm)

When you're not playing, keep the bow up straight, so you don't strain your hand and fingers.



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## Exercise 1: Build the bow hold

1. Hold your bow with your left hand in the middle of the bow without touching the hair.
2. Lay down right hand fingers over the bow with a relaxed and flexible feeling in your hand and fingers. Your thumb should not be locked. Your thumb nail should point in the direction of the tip of the bow. The side of your thumb touches the bow between the leather and the frog.
3. Hold your wrist and knuckles on the same height as the bow itself.
4. Place the tip of your pinky on the bow. The pinky is curved. The other fingers lay loosely on the bow.
5. Slowly let go of the left hand and hold the bow with your right hand only.

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## Exercise 2: Window wiper



For the following exercise you might want to hold the bow at the balance point somewhere between the middle of the bow and the frog. In this way you can focus on the movement without missing strength and getting a tensed hand. As you progress, you can hold the bow closer to the frog and eventually at the frog.

Take the bow in the bow hold and move the bow like a windows wiper by pivoting your wrist.

By giving your bow a push with your pinky, the bow swings to the right.

By giving your bow a push with your index finger, the bow swings back to the left to the starting position.

Experience the 'ping pong'-ing between your pinky and index finger.

During the whole exercise the bow hold stays intact, but your fingers function as a spring system. The bow hold is not rigid, but your fingers are flexible.



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## Exercise 2: Bridge



In this exercise only your pinky is allowed to move (bend

and stretch). If your other fingers, your hand or your wrist move along, grasp the palm of your hand and hold it during the exercise.

By bending and stretching (never overstretch and/or lock your pinky), the tip of the bow slowly moves up and down just a couple of inches.

It's important to have a controlled and correct movement. This is not about how fast, how many times and how far.

## Lesson 3: Smooth Bowing

### Tips:

- Use only the middle 50% of the bow. You can place stickers if you find it hard to see where that is while bowing.
- Keep your upper arm still
- Move your wrist and fingers, not only your lower arm
- Practice in front of the mirror to see if you are bowing straight between the bridge and the fingerboard
- Don't play too fast, but look for a regular sound and a full tone in long notes
- Take a lot of breaks and shake your arms to keep relaxed

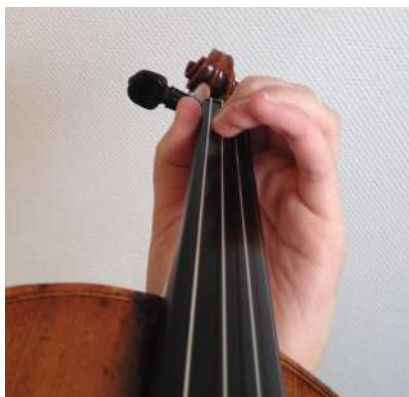


### Proceed to the next lesson when:

- You can bow straight between the bridge and fingerboard with a regular sound without looking. It should go automatically and that takes time.
- You have a regular beautiful sound on each string with almost seamless bow changes
- Your bow arm and movement is relaxed and you're not muting the sound by tension

## Lesson 4: First Finger

- Make sure you place your finger firmly and confidently on the string
- Your index finger should be round when placed on the string, so your finger tip touches the string. Your knuckles shouldn't collapse.
- Listen to yourself... are you playing in tune?
- Keep your left wrist straight.
- The other fingers are dangling above the string like an umbrella.



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### Exercise 1

**0011**

**1100**

**0101**

**1010**

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## Twinkle twinkle (partially) in 3 ways

0000110

0000110

0000110

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## Color codes for the strings

From low to high on the violin: G string is blue, D string is green, A string is red and E string is yellow.

Do you play the viola? C string is blue, G string is green, D string is red and A string is yellow.

Tip: Don't place stickers on your fingerboard. Your ears won't be trained and you'll never learn to play in tune. Use the D'Addario NS Micro Violin and Viola Tuner instead. [Click here](#) to buy! Don't use it all the time, but take it off regularly to learn to train and trust your ears



# Lesson 5: Whole Bow

## Tips:

- Practice in front of the mirror, because you can't see if you're bowing straight when looking at the violin
- Practice whole bows with stops in between
- Analyze what's your personal bow hold at every moment of the bow stroke
- Regular sound requires irregular bowing. Strive to a regular full and healthy tone all the time
- Make sure your bow hair is rosined everywhere to get a good sound with the whole bow
- Practice slowly with high quality

## Proceed to the next lesson when:

- You're comfortable using the whole bow
- The movement of your bow arm, wrist and fingers smooth
- You don't fear the frog ;)
- You can make a regular beautiful sound with the whole bow
- One can't hear the difference between your up bow and down bow

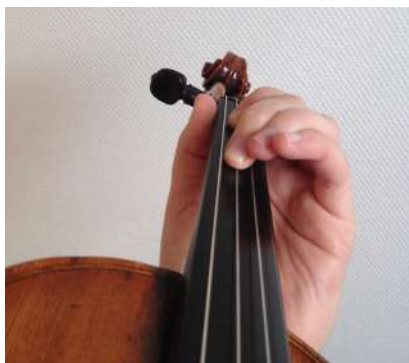
Do you experience bow shakes or bounces?

Work on relaxing your right shoulder, arm, wrist and fingers. Practice with a lot of breaks and do some relaxation exercises in between, which can be as simple as just shaking out. Make your movements smooth and light. Do less instead of more. Don't beat yourself up, but be curious for the solution and practice with love and patience.



## Lesson 6: Second Finger

- Make sure to place your finger firmly and confidently on the string
- Place your finger curved and with the cushion of your finger tip on the string
- When your second finger is on the string, also have your first finger on the string in the right place



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Do Re Mi

**012 210 201 120**

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Father Jacob (partially)

**0120 0120**

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Mary has a little Lamb

**2101222 111 222**

**2101222 11 210**

# Lesson 7: String Crossing

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## Silent string crossings

Let the bow rest on the string (slightly above the middle of the bow) and cross from the G-string to the D-string, to the A-string, to the E-string and back again. Let the bow rest on the string with weight and without making a sound.

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## Exercises

**GGDD**

**DDGG**

**DDAA**

**AA DD**

**AAEE**

**EEAA**

**GDGD**

**DGDG**

**DADA**

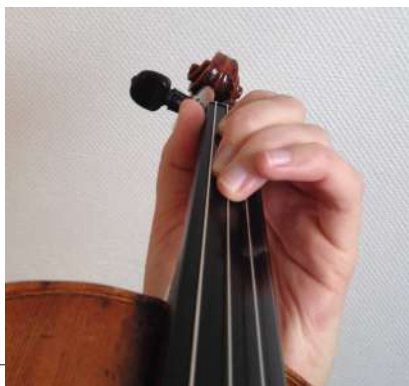
**ADAD**

**AEAE**

**EAEA**

# Lesson 8: Third Finger

- Your third finger should be placed right next to the second finger
- As your second finger is round, your third finger can slide over to be placed on its tip. Only in this way the distance can be small enough to play in tune



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## Scales

G major one octave

**0123 0123**

**3210 3210**

D major one octave

**0123 0123**

**3210 3210**

A major one octave

**0123 0123**

**3210 3210**



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Old MacDonald

**3330110 11003**

**0 3330110 11003**

**00333 00333 333 333 3333**

**33 3330110 11003**

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Twinkle Twinkle

**0000110 3322110**

**003321 003321**

**0000110 3322110**

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Father Jacob

0120 0120

230 230

010320 010320

010 010

Variation: Practice the above melodies starting on a different string!

## Lesson 9: Bow Division



If you've placed stickers on the bow to mark the middle 50%, it's now time to remove them and just place one sticker right in the middle of the bow.

For the long notes, use whole bow.

For the short notes, use half the bow being either the lower half or the upper half.

Be very precise about the exact lower or upper half and don't avoid the extreme frog and tip.

Long Long Short Short Short Short  
Pan-cakes ma-ple- sy-rop

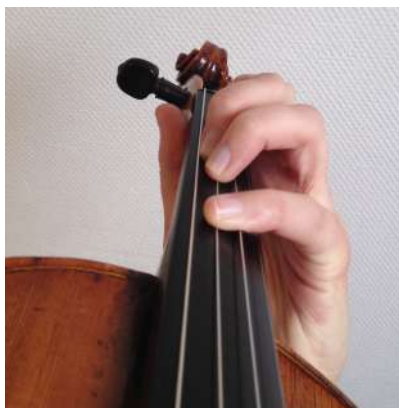
Short Short Short Short Long Long  
Ma-ple- sy-rop pan-cakes

Long Short Short Long Short Short  
Straw-ber-ry Straw-ber-ry

Short Short Long Short Short Long  
Cin-na-mon Cin-na-mon  
At the frog at the tip

## Lesson 10: Fourth Finger

- Place your finger slightly curved by tilting your hand towards the neck of the violin
- Strengthen your pinky by tapping it on the string while keeping the other three fingers on the string
- Give your fourth finger some extra practice, as most players find it the most difficult one



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Check the fourth  
finger

01234 0

01234 0

01234 0

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Pinky training

012 34 34 34 3210

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## Scales with the fourth finger

G major one octave (C major for viola)

**01234 123**

**3210 3210**

D major one octave (G major for viola)

**01234 123**

**3210 3210**

A major one octave (D major for viola)

**01234 123**

**3210 3210**

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## Lightly Row

**422 311 0123 444**

**422 311 02440**

**1111 123 2222 234**

**422 311 02440**

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## Theme from Beethoven's 9th Symphony

2234 4321 0012 211

2234 4321 0012 100

1120 12320 12321 0111

2234 4321 0012 100

Variation: Practice the above melodies starting on another string!

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## Scales with broken thirds (jumps)

A third is a distance of two notes. A scale in broken thirds means you don't play these notes at the same time.

On the way up you go two steps up and one step down.

On the way down you go two steps down and one step up.

These scales are good to practice for left hand finger independence.

Only start practicing them when you really master the regular scales.

G major one octave

**021324310213243**

**42312013423120**

D major one octave

**021324310213243**

**42312013423120**

A major one octave

**021324310213243**

**42312013423120**

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Woohoo, congrats on finishing this course!

Thank you for following along!

## So... what's next?

After the success of this short beginner course, I decided to continue these free lessons teaching the violin from the European tradition with scales, etudes, beautiful classical pieces and inspiring student concertos and concertinos.

Sign up at  
[www.violinlessonsforfree.com](http://www.violinlessonsforfree.com)  
to continue our lessons together!

