

Basic Shifting

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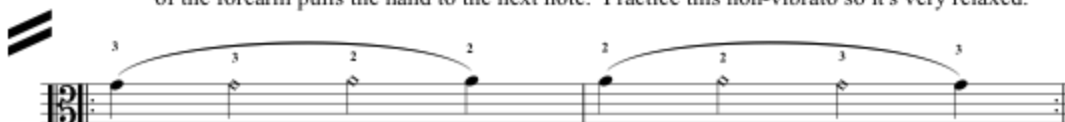
Master each group of exercises before moving on to the next set.
Once learned, it takes just a few seconds to make any individual shift in your repertoire clean and smooth.



Use a continuous **relaxed** vibrato on the regular note until the harmonic note starts.
Let the fingers relax to harmonic pressure without first stopping the vibrato.



GLIDE between these two harmonic notes by simply opening and closing the left elbow.
The left fingers should be relaxed and flexible. Just substitute one finger for another.
The left wrist should be seen to BEND as you watch it in a mirror during this exercise, as the relaxed hand stays where it is for a fraction of a second, before the movement of the forearm pulls the hand to the next note. Practice this non-vibrato so it's very relaxed.



This combines the first two exercises and lets the left hand relax **BEFORE** the arm movement starts.
Try to maintain a continuous vibrato from note to harmonic and back, but at least make sure that you do not stop the vibrato before the hand relaxes to harmonic pressure.
The bow arm plays a whole note: keep speed constant **WITHOUT** stopping the arm motion.
This exercise takes about one week to master.



The bow arm plays a whole note: keep speed constant **WITHOUT** stopping the arm motion.
The vibrato continues until the left hand springs up for the open string and GLIDES to next note.
This duplicates the relaxed "springy" feeling of a quick shift.



The bow arm plays a whole note: keep speed constant **WITHOUT** stopping the arm motion.
The vibrato continues through the harmonic "squeak". Left arm GLIDES to each note.
This should feel the same as the previous exercise.



THE SHIFT! The vibrato is continuous, the bow arm keeps moving at the same speed and the left hand glides along the string with flexible fingers and wrist during the inaudible moment of harmonic pressure.



RALPH FIELDING teaches viola at the extraordinary new (and tuition-free) Conservatory of Music at Lynn University and formerly taught at the University of Southern California. He served as President of the American Viola Society and has given master classes at such institutions as Oberlin College, Cleveland Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, San Francisco Conservatory, the Colburn School, Rice University, and Indiana University. He won his first professional orchestral audition at the age of 17 and went on to play for more than a dozen years with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His orchestral repertoire students continue to win positions in ICSOM and regional orchestras and he is a regular viola coach at the New World Symphony.