**Slip and Slide: Teaching String Shifting with Ease**

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**Shifting is generally taught when a student is set-up correctly and familiar with playing in the first position. Below are** a few of exercises, games, and pieces that teachers can use to help students successfully navigate around the fingerboard.

**VIOLIN: BEGINNING SET UP (PREPARING THE ARM, HAND, AND FRAME):**

Sliding on the Magic X

* Violin in rest position or playing position
* A “Magic X” should be marked on the base joint of the student’s left index finger with a pen

Tap over High Dot

* A “high dot” is a little piece of colored plastic tape or a small sticker. It is placed on the fingerboard, under the A and D strings, dividing the string length into two

**The first songs (pluck over high dot with pinky)**

**Ant song**

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G–D–G **(D**–**A**–**D and A**–**E**–**A)**

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**VIOLIN: PRE SHIFTING EXERCISES**

Rebecca Henry: “I like Ice Cream”

* Tap over high dot, then in first position, then back to high dot
* Touch your nose!

Pinky Plucks (Paul Rolland’s Shadow Game and violinpractice.com)

* AE pluck (over first position) GD pluck (over high dot)
* Reverse
* Practice on all strings



Tap, Swing, and Slide

* Tap fingers on the fingerboard
* Tap and slide up to the high dot and back
* Tap and slide up to the end of the fingerboard and back
* Relaxed thumb

**VIOLIN: PREPARING AND ADDING THE BOW**

Shadow Shifting

* Without the instrument
* Same directions and opposite
* Different speed

Adding the bow

* Open string slide: slide on the magic X to the third position while playing the open strings on half notes
* Play Twinkle (theme) and slide to the third position and back on opening strings
* Ghosts slides (all fingers on all strings)
* Watch the thumb, make sure the thumb travels with the hand
* Tap the thumb to relax the hand

**VIOLIN: FINDING THIRD POSITION**

* Play the notes leading up to C, G, D, and A on all strings
* Matching octaves (first with open string) then in third position with harmonic (Rolland)
* Perfect 4th and Perfect 5th exercises (shift during open strings)

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* Practice these exercises on all strings

**VIOLIN: PLAYING IN THIRD POSITION**

* Practice C and D major scale
* Review songs in third position
* *Whistler: Introducing the Positions, Vol. 1*



**VIOLIN: SHIFTING FROM FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH POSITIONS**

Pieces

* Up the Scale with Au Clair de Lune (F major scale)
* Check the high F with F in first position
* Play in first then directly repeat in 8th position (check thumb)



* *Walking*
* *Ševčík, Op. 8*



* One finger scale: repeat each note twice. When playing with the third finger, place first and second finger gently on the string (developing good FBB finger patterns)
* Two finger scale



* Carl Flesh Scales: Scales on One String
* Different ways of shifting

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF SHIFTS**

* Anticipated Shifts (silent shifts)
* Delayed Shifts (expressive shifts)

**REFERENCES**

Paul Rolland *Young Strings in Action*

Mimi Zweig *Violin Pedagogy*

Rebecca Henry [*www.ViolinPractice.com*](http://www.ViolinPractice.com)