

Tuning your Instrument - Violin

Parents tune the instruments, not beginning students

Brothers, sisters, relatives, friends and neighbors ARE NOT to hold, tune or play your instrument UNLESS that have already been properly taught how to play.

It is vital beginning string players practice on a tuned instrument at home. String instruments are primarily made of wood. Wood will respond to changes in temperature and humidity. In high humidity, the wood will slightly expand (you won't be able to actually see the wood expand). In lower humidity, the wood will contract. This expansion and contraction causes the strings on your instrument to go out of tune.

Every time you take your instrument back and forth from school, there is a change in humidity (home → outside → car → outside → school). This means your instrument must be tuned whenever it goes from one place to another.

Not tuning your instrument means your strings will be out of tune. Will you be able to play in tune if your strings are not in tune? Imagine trying to ride a bike with one wheel missing, or trying to watch TV without it being plugged in.

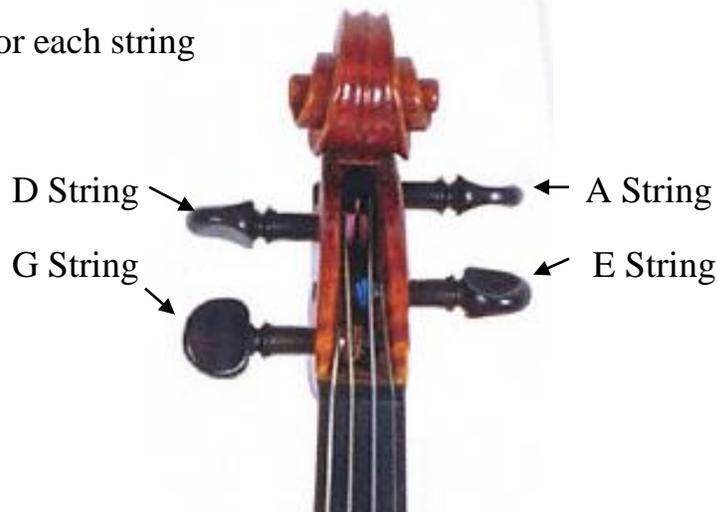
Below are instructions on how to properly tune your instrument.

There are **two** ways to tune your instrument. The first way is to use the **pegs**, located here



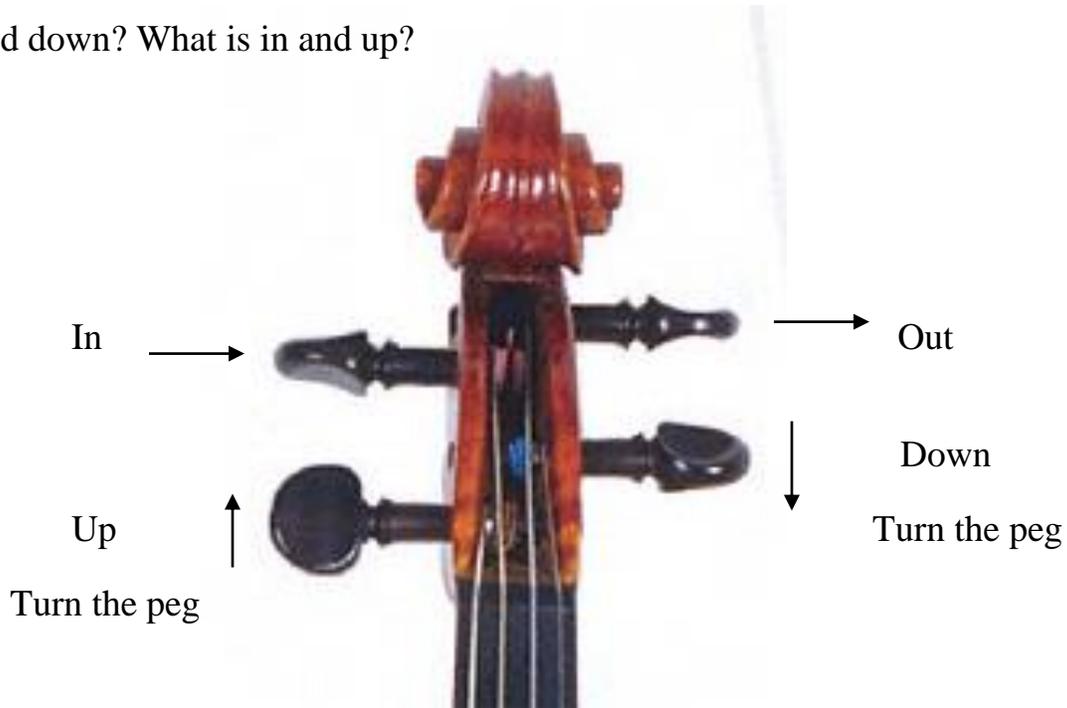
If the strings are not greatly out of tune, skip the first step and move onto the fine tuners.

There is one peg for each string



Pegs are used for large adjustments in pitch. You must be very careful when using the pegs. If you tighten the string too much, the string can break. It is best to first **pull out and down**, then push in and up to the correct pitch. You don't need to be exact. Once you are close, use the fine tuners to get to the exact pitch.

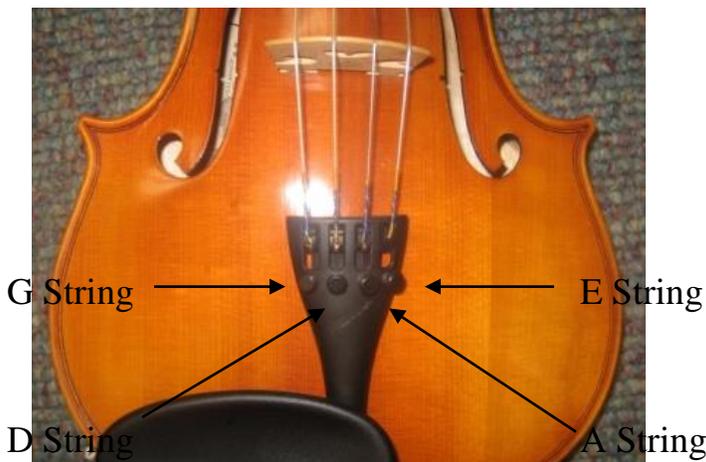
What is out and down? What is in and up?



A sharp increase in humidity can cause a peg to get stuck. If this happens, **DO NOT** try to loosen it. This will result in a broken peg, peg box, or possibly a broken violin neck. These are costly repairs. If one of your pegs gets stuck, bring your instrument to school so I can fix it.

Once your strings are fairly in tune, then you can move onto the fine tuners, which are located here

Like the pegs, there is one fine tuner for each string



Fine tuners are for small adjustments in pitch. To raise the pitch, turn the fine tuner **clockwise**. To lower the pitch, turn the fine tuner **counter clockwise**. Be careful not to loosen the fine tuners too much, or they will come out of the tailpiece. If the fine tuner is turned all the way in, where it won't turn any more, loosen the fine tuner, turn the peg up and then re-adjust with the fine tuner.

My pegs keep slipping. How do I keep them in place?

The pegs are slightly tapered. The further they are pushed in, the more resistance there is to keep them from slipping. **Caution...** When firmly pushing in a peg, apply equal pressure with your free hand to the opposite side of the scroll. This will prevent the neck from breaking.

How do I know when my strings are in tune?

Go to the following website www.123violintuner.com. A pitch will be played for each of the four open strings. Simply match each string to the corresponding pitch on website. There is also a tuning track on the practice DVD.

If you have an **in tune** piano, or a metronome, you may also use that for reference pitches.