

**Storage**

Orchestral stringed instruments are very susceptible to temperature and humidity damage. The instruments should be stored at a consistent temperature of 65-78°F and 40%-50% humidity whenever possible to prevent warpage and cracking.

- Keep your instrument in its case or bag when you are not playing. This also protects the instrument from external damage.
- Keep your instrument away from anything that strongly affects air humidity and temperature, such as heaters, air conditioning vents, windows, etc. Do NOT leave your instrument in the car.
- Give your instrument time to acclimate itself to a room, inside its case, before taking it out to play.
- Heat causes the body to swell in the summer and cold causes it to contract in the winter. Prolonged exposure to dry, humid climates can cause lower action, buzzing, varnish checking, and wood cracks. If you live in a dry climate, consider purchasing a room or instrument humidifier (placed through the instrument's F-hole). Check the humidifier at least once a week for moisture content. Cello and bass tops especially may react dramatically to weather.

**Bridge**

Always check the bridge to make sure its perpendicular at a 90-degree angle to prevent warping or cracking. Constant pressure from tuning will cause the bridge to lean or fall on the instruments soft top if not adjusted consistently.

**Pegs**

Humidity or temperature changes can also cause wood pegs to stick which can be difficult for turning. Peg compound (or "peg dope") is used to lubricate the peg, but will also provide enough friction for the peg not to slip.

**Bow**

It is important to always loosen the bow when you are finished playing. Loosening the bow will help prevent warping and overstretching the hair. Avoid tightening the bow too much as this can cause the bow to back bow and warp permanently. Bows should be cleaned or rehaired at least once a year. Ask your local luthier if you think it may be time for a re-hair.

**Cleaning**

Wipe the stick of the bow, body, and strings of your instrument with a lint free cloth after every use to remove any rosin residue and prevent buildup. Extra rosin buildup requires extreme caution and may need to be professionally cleaned by a luthier. Never use household chemical cleaning agents to clean your instrument or bow as they can strip the varnish and negatively impact the sound and look of your instrument.

It is good routine to have your instrument's health checked at least once a year by a professional luthier. Any potential seams, splits, and buzzes should be diagnosed before they progress into more costly repairs.

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