

Recipe for Good Shifting

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Ingredients:

Short Finger Nails
Light Left Hand and Fingers
Imagination
Balanced, Supported Violin Hold
Shifting Etude (pg. 12)

Shifting should be light and fluid.

3 Elements of Shifting:

1. Glide lightly on top of the string.
2. Everything moves as a unit (hand, fingers, elbow, arm, etc.).
3. Always shift from slow to fast (for shifting up as well as down).

The Boat Story:

Use the questions below to prompt the student while telling the story. After completing the story, transfer the concepts into the 3 Elements of Shifting. Have the student tell the story back immediately AND at his or her next lesson!

Preliminary Question: Have you ever ridden in a boat before?

Question 1: How does a boat move on top of the water?

Answer 1: It glides lightly on top of the water.

Question 2: Do the passengers, life jackets, boat and tackle box all move together across the water? Or do they come separately?

Answer 2: They all move as a unit. If the boat turns left, everything in the boat moves with it, even the skier being pulled behind it! It is one unit, traveling lightly on top of the water.

Question 3: When a boat takes off from the shore, how does it accelerate out into the water? (choose the best answer below)

- A. From 60 MPH to 60 MPH?
- B. From 30 MPH to 5 MPH?
- C. From 0 MPH to 40 MPH?

Answer 3: The answer is C. The boat moves from slow to fast as it takes off from the shore.

For a visual and kinesthetic understanding of Element 3 off of the instrument, try moving a solid object across a table from slow to fast. Have the student try it next.



Imagining this story and these images can help you or your student remember the 3 Elements of Shifting.

For shifts above 4th position, make sure the student brings his or her hand and arm around the instrument while shifting. Remember, everything moves as a unit!

Once the student understands the story, he or she should try each element out on a simple shift (see etude on next page), beginning with Element 1, 2 and then 3, mastering each element before moving onto the next one.

If the student has a “bad” shift, one of the three elements is not being adhered to. Ask the student which element was not in place; let them self-evaluate so they know what to pay attention to while practicing at home.

This simple, three-part recipe is a quick and fun way for students to learn good shifting from the start. All skill levels can benefit from the understanding of these elements.