

How to look after your instrument

Regular maintenance

1. Try not to touch the varnish; handle it by the neck and the end-button only.
2. Clean off rosin and finger marks with a soft cloth (microfibre is ideal) or duster before you put the instrument back in its case.



3. Check periodically that the bridge is straight; if not, move it carefully back. Support the back of the bridge with your thumbs and the front with your fingers, and gently pull the bridge straight.

4. When you change the strings, rub a little dry (unused) soap into the groove of the top of the bridge. This will help the strings to slide easily over the bridge, and make it easier to straighten the bridge. Take extra care to check that the bridge remains straight while the new strings settle in.

5. Check the adjusters periodically to make sure that they are not wound down so far that they touch the front of the instrument.
6. Protect the instrument from extremes of temperature. In particular, don't leave it in a parked car in hot weather, as this can permanently damage the varnish.

Longer-term maintenance

1. It's good to get a new instrument checked over by the maker after about six months, and thereafter to have an annual check.
2. The things that may change over time are as follows:
 - Although the soundpost will have been carefully fitted and adjusted when the instrument left the maker, it may be necessary to adjust the position or refit the soundpost later. As the instrument settles down, the string tension can slightly change the shape of the instrument. The body may become slightly deeper, and therefore that the soundpost becomes very slightly too short. You can often tell if this has happened; if the instrument has lost some of its clarity and power. It can also happen, that as the instrument develops, the original position of the soundpost is no longer optimal.
 - There may be some wear to the varnish, caused by abrasion from sweat and dirt, accidental damage to the instrument, etc. The varnish should be checked regularly so that any damage can be repaired to prevent wear to the wood beneath.
 - The fingerboard will wear into pits and grooves from the sweat of the fingers and the vibration of the strings, and will need to be resurfaced.