

Perfecting the Shifting Process, a basic outline

Melissa Barru, June 2017

1. Ear training
 - a. Intervals
 - b. Singing before and during
 - c. Hearing the shift
 - d. Awareness of what you hear and feel
2. Left hand set up
 - a. Fingers, wrist, and elbow all in a line
 - b. Thumb curved with no tension, fingers curl naturally
3. Hand frames
 - a. Intervals
 - b. See notes intervalically
 - i. Intonation
4. Mechanics
 - a. Thumb
 - i. Release the tension
 - ii. Thumb travels with the hand/wrist
 - b. Left arm unit: fingers, wrist, elbow in a unit
 - i. Open and close the elbow to initiate the shift
 - ii. The unit is stable in 1st through 4th position for violin
 - iii. Only in the upper positions should you “break” the unit or bend the wrist
 1. The thumb should always be “anchored” to the neck
 - c. Shifting from Day 1 Exercise
5. The Shifting Game
6. Bow
 - a. Lead with the bow
 - b. Bow speed equals shift speed, see 7.
 - c. String crossings
7. Timing shifts
 - a. Fast shifts are needed in slow music
 - b. Slow shifts for fast music played at a slow speed
8. Efficiency/Effectiveness
 - a. Slow practice
 - b. Cut down excess motion and noise
9. Extensions
 - a. One note, only one finger leaves the current position
 - b. Crawling: using extensions to change position rather than shifting
10. Artistic Slides
 - a. Save bow
 - b. Slide speed = bow speed

THE SHIFTING GAME:

A.K.A. 16 Ways to Travel from one Position to Any Other Position or Yost Shifting

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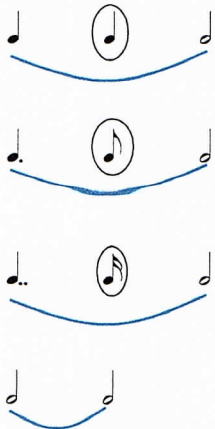
(Adapted from Dr. Juliet White-Smith, University of Northern CO, May 2005)

1 – 1	2 – 1	3 – 1	4 – 1
1 – 2	2 – 2	3 – 2	4 – 2
1 – 3	2 – 3	3 – 3	4 – 3
1 – 4	2 – 4	3 – 4	4 – 4

Strategies for the Shifting Game:

1. It is easier to introduce the game without any music (or other information) in front of the students.
2. Pick a starting and ending position. First to Third is a good place to start.
3. Pick a string to play on. A and D are great for violin, D and G for viola.
4. Pick a key signature to play in. I like to start with D Major.
5. Shift with the finger you are starting with, not the finger you are ending with.
6. Practice in columns.
7. The first finger you play is the auxiliary note in the new position. Same finger shifts require no auxiliary notes.
8. Use the following rhythms for developing the shift (the circled note is the auxiliary note)

Ascending Shift



Descending Shift

