

**Above The First Position**  
**CASMEC, Friday, Feb. 15**  
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**Pre-requisites for Learning Positions**

- Stable, defined left hand position (especially bass)
- Relaxed left hand, no squeezing thumb
- Playing in tune in first position
- Fingerboard geography in first position (note names & what is a ½ step)
- Extensions on cello, all finger patterns on violin & viola

**Defining Positions**

- 1<sup>st</sup> position – first finger is one letter name above open string
- 2<sup>nd</sup> position – first finger is two letter names above open string (on C or C# on the A string)
- Etc.
- ½ position – second finger is one letter name above open string
- BASS: Many systems – some as described above (with 2 ½ Pos.)
  - Simandl Position Names explained in detail:  
<https://sites.google.com/a/lsr7.net/mr-tourtellot-s-strings-site/zzzzzz/posture/posture---double-bass/double-bass-positions>
  - Rabbath/Vance Positions Explained (and exercises):  
<https://doublebassblog.org/2018/05/fundamentals-of-double-bass-technique-part-1-left-hand-fundamentals.htm>

**Learning Positions**

- Playing in tune – fingers are closer together – listen for ringing tones
- Learn fingerboard geography & how to read – what are the note names?
  - Naming notes – across the strings
  - Naming notes – walking fingers exercises
  - Naming notes - play all the Bbs you know? How can you plan the same note in 3<sup>rd</sup> position?
  - Learn M3 vs m3
  - Some sort of systematic book/exercises for teaching reading in positions.
    - Violin: Holmes & Webber: *Above the First Position*
    - Viola: *A Tune a Day*, Book 3
    - Cello: Richard Mooney: *Position Pieces for Cello*
    - Bass: Simandl: *New Method for Double Bass*
- Hand Shape/thumb position in high positions (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Position and above)

From *Above the First Position* by Holmes and Webber (Carl Fischer)

### FIRST AND THIRD POSITION CHANGES (By Way of Open Strings)

The image displays a musical score for guitar, written in G major (one sharp) and common time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers 0 through 4. The second staff includes two measures marked 'Test' with an 'x' symbol, followed by a measure marked 'A' in a circle. The third staff contains a measure marked 'B' in a circle. The fourth staff continues the melodic line. The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques such as bends, slurs, and specific fingerings for each note.

From *Suzuki Violn School, Book 4* (old edition), (Summy-Birchard)

Exercise 1 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. It contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 2, 3, followed by a measure rest, then 1, 2, 3, followed by a measure rest, then 2, 3, 4, 3, followed by a measure rest, and finally 2, 1, 2, followed by a measure rest. Below the staff, there are two horizontal lines labeled '1' and '2', indicating breath marks. The second staff continues the sequence with fingerings: 3, 2, 1, followed by a measure rest, then 4, 3, 2, followed by a measure rest, then 4, 3, 2, 1, followed by a measure rest, and finally 3, 2, 1, followed by a measure rest. A horizontal line labeled '1' is placed below the final measure of the second staff, indicating a breath mark.



## Shifting Positions

- Pre-Shifting Exercises
  - Sirens
  - Ski Jumps
  - Left Pinkie Open String Pizzicato alternating with tapping on top of violin on G-string side
- Shifting on Open String
- Shifting on the Same Finger
- Shifting Changing Fingers
  - Guide Fingers: Shift up on the lower # finger, Shift down on the old finger
- Practicing Shifts
  - Slurs (makes hand more relaxed)
  - Practice the guide fingers, then guide finger plus goal note, then with dotted-rhythm (closer to the real shift timing), then the real shift, (then remove slur if needed)

From *Scales and Arpeggios with Shifting Practice* by Cindy Moyer (Galaxy Music)



- Common Shifting Problems
  - Tension in Left Hand, Squeezing Thumb (Violin/Viola – instrument held by chin & shoulder, Cello – saddle balances on sternum, Bass – upper bout of instrument balances on hip and instrument rotates to the right)
  - Too much weight on shifting finger (shift on the outside fur of a cat)
  - Shift too fast
  - Thumb not moving with the hand in the shift
  - Shift (esp. violin & viola) comes from elbow – wrist should be still – move like compass in geometry
  - Changing hand shape for higher positions – 4<sup>th</sup> position or above
    - Violin & Viola – thumb moves under neck, touching saddle – arm twists to hand more like cello LH – fingernails move from looking at your face to looking sideways – shifting back down thumb and hand shape return to lower position hand shape
    - Cello/Bass – elbow and hand open & raise to move around upper bout of instruments, 4<sup>th</sup> Position – thumb moves to opposite 1<sup>st</sup> finger - higher positions use just 3 fingers (diatonic fingerings like on violin/viola)
  - Bow weight to hide or emphasize shift, timing on changing bows