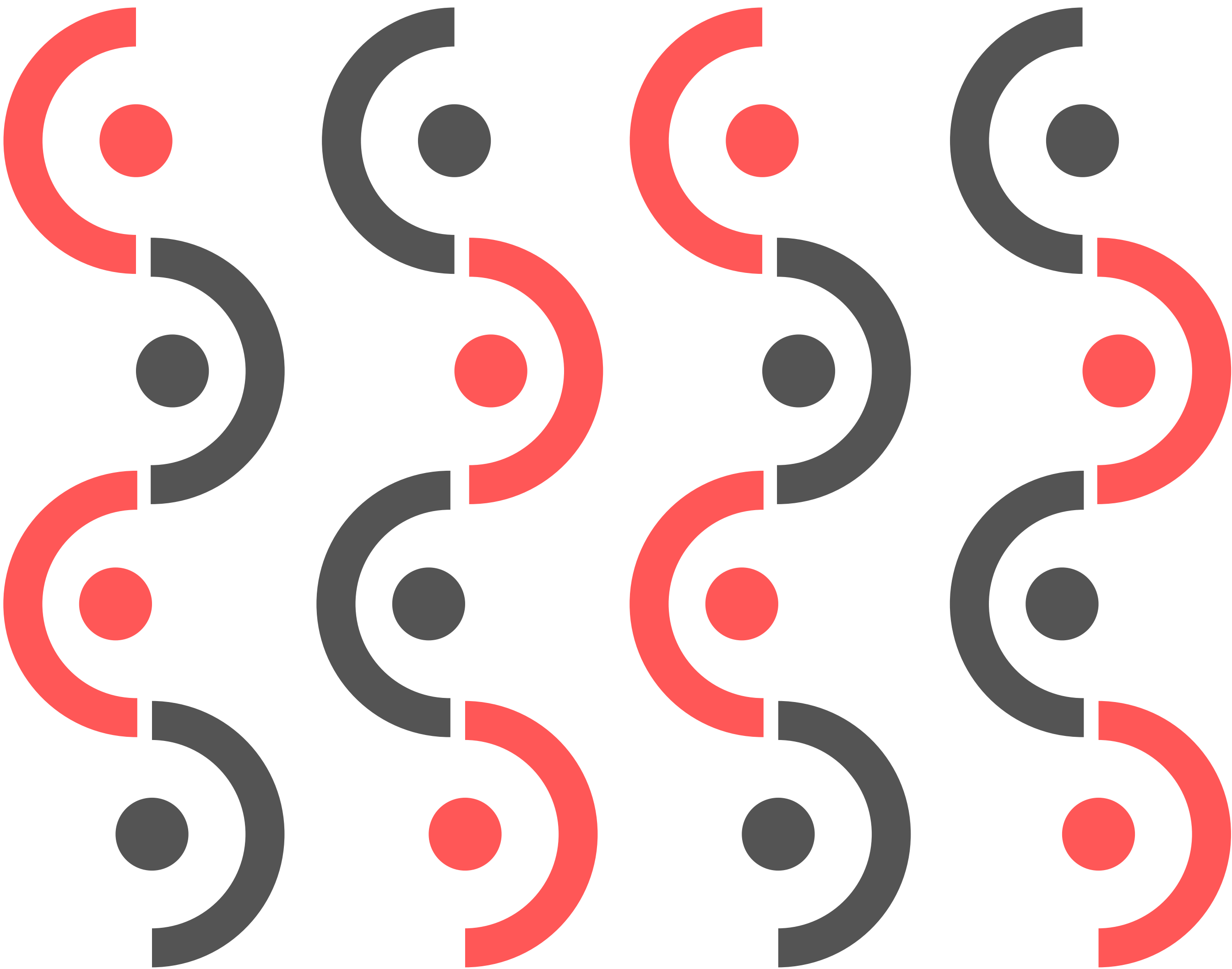


A Violist's & Violinist's

Isolated-Practice

Guidebook

Kathryn Patricia Cobbler |
Loop Pedal Violist, Composer & Educator



A Note to Upper String Players:

Hello and Welcome!

So excited that you have come across this isolated practice guide. I hope you find the content included helpful.

How to Use This Resource:

The following exercises for your right hand and mental practice were designed to grow your communication skills on your instrument and to fuel your artistry. Each exercise will provide you with a suggested sequence. Feel free to change or modify each exercise to meet your work/life practice and music goals.



A Few Notes Before Getting Started:

Why Isolated Practice??

As bowed string instrument players, we use our bodies to execute many movements all to serve a solo voice.

We are the champions of mastering small muscle movements. We rely on the efficiency of all of our muscles moving in tandem to execute our music on our instruments.

...But what happens when there is a "leak" in our musical execution. Whether it is due to injury, strained muscles, or too much tension while playing, we may not be able to execute musical passages as we would like to.

What This Guide Will Help You To Do:

Isolating Practice to Bring More Wholeness' to Your Movements:

The goal of this guidebook is to aide violists and violinists in being more confident in the execution of their artistry through the bow hand and musical vision through mental practice and improvisation.

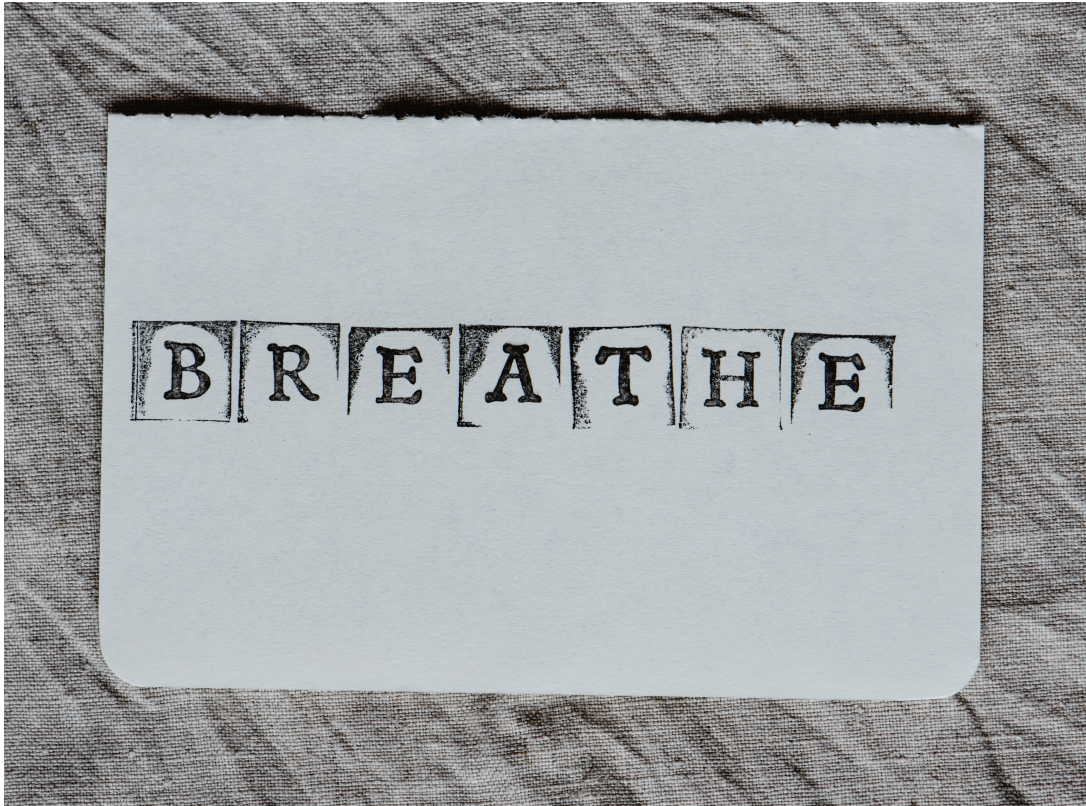
You will be provided with activities that can be added to your daily practice routine to strengthen your artistry and efficiency in musical execution.

A large part of our musical practice is getting curious to find the "leaks" in our technical and artistic performance.

Hope you Enjoy the Content!

A Violist's & Violinist's Isolated Practice Guidebook

Guide-At-A-Glance:



BOW TECHNIQUE, SOUND & BALANCE

'Breathing' More Into Our Musical Practice

You may have heard it said before, as bowed string players, "our bow is our 'breath'". It is the bow interacting with our strings that brings our sound to life.

In order to bring more openness and richness to our sound, we need to pay attention to how we balance the body, and interact with gravity.

These set of exercises will start with your feet...



SOUND JOURNALING

Connecting Our Head, Heart, and Hands

What is Sound journaling?

It is the practice of allowing us to be in touch with our own creativity before we dive into practice our technique and standard repertoire.

Through this three-step improvisation exercise, participants will be led through creating, listening, and interpreting our sound through an emotional lens.

THE ABOVE EXERCISES & YOUR PRACTICE ROUTINE:

Remember, Change Comes In Small Steps--Not Leaps!

For each of the activities you are looking at intergrating into your daily musical practice, I am going to invite you to commit to practicing them for 30 practice days in a row.

I have heard it said that "consistency breeds legitimacy" if you want to bring valuable change to your practice, sound, technique, and artistry, consistency is the key!

GETTING STARTED WITH SOUND & BALANCE :

Creating a solid foundation
'From the Ground Up'

Open Chest, Soft Joints:

The quality of our sound starts with our posture and how we balance the instrument.

When I refer to posture, I am reminded of the analogy of the coat hanger I learned from the wonderful violist & pedagogue, Rennie Regehr:

Coat Hanger Chest:

Like a coat hanger, we need keep our chest and shoulders open. (Using a viola posture where you 'nose is in line with your navel' can help achieve this.

Arm Weight: Using Arm Weight to Achieve a Rich Viola Sound

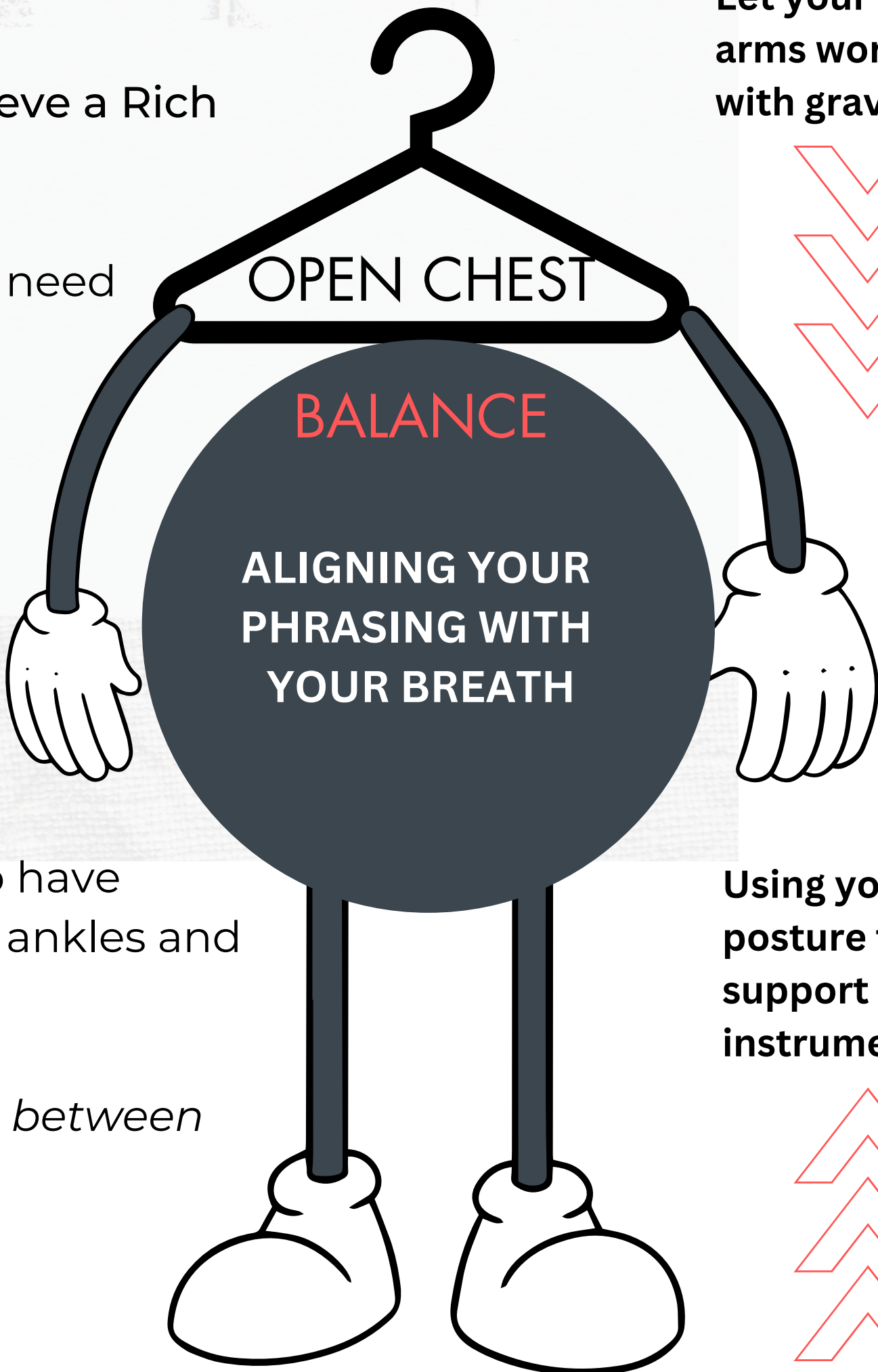
Just as clothes 'hang off' of a hanger, we need to use the natural weight of our arms to draw sound from our instruments.

Remember to work with gravity; this starts with using the natural weight of our arms.

Soft Joints, Balanced Feet:

In setting up your posture, make sure to have feet shoulder-width apart with both soft ankles and soft knees.

**Remember to keep your balance equal between the heels and balls of your feet.*



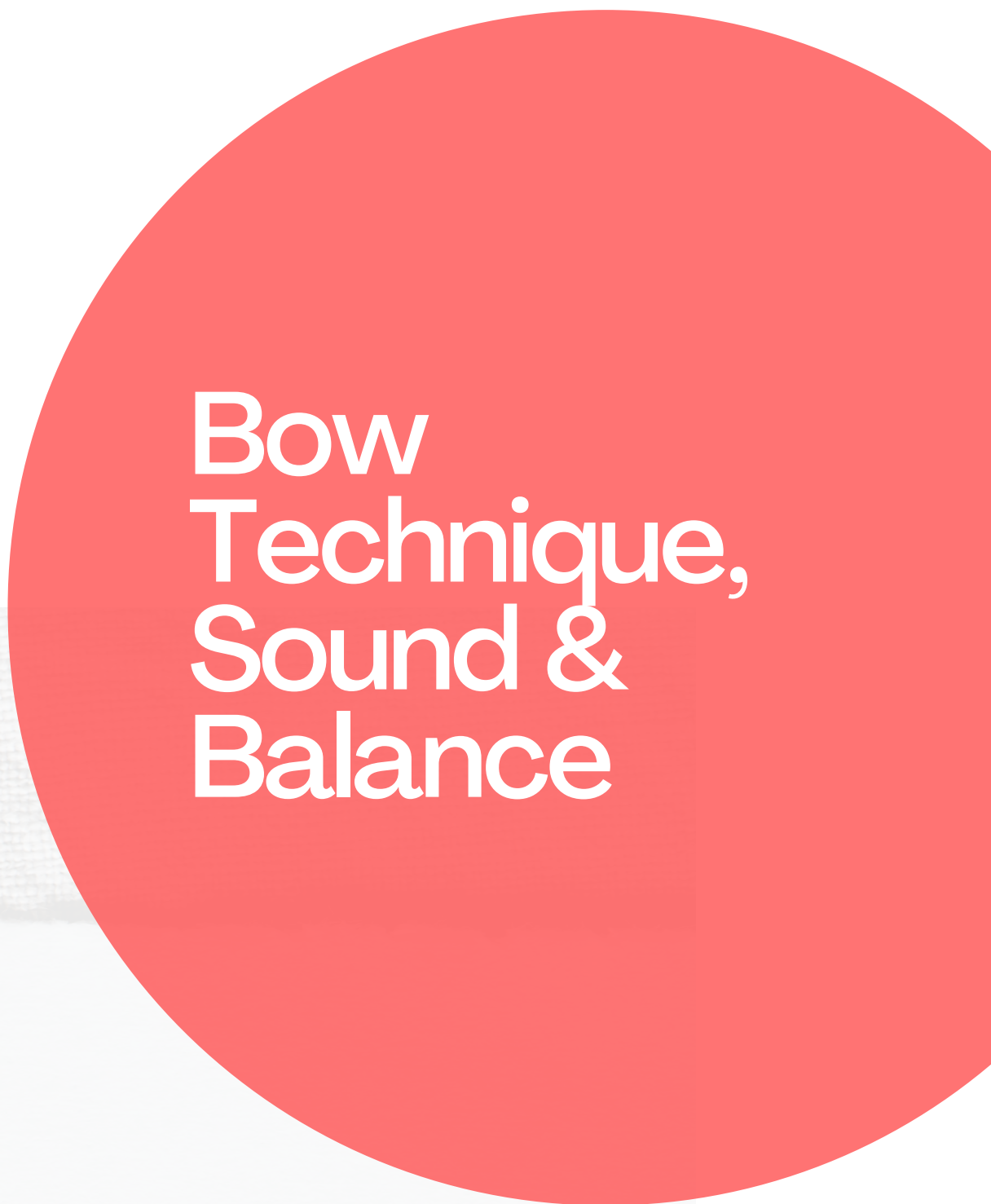
Let your arms work with gravity

Using your posture to support your instrument

'AIR VIOLA/VIOLIN'

EXERCISE :

Creating a solid foundation
'From the Ground Up'



SLOW BOW EXERCISE :

"Deep Listening, Singing Slowly"

"How slow can you go??"

Slow practice may not be the most exciting practice tool, but is the one that bring the most awareness to our playing.

Before you jump into scales or a study, start by playing slow long tones on your open strings.

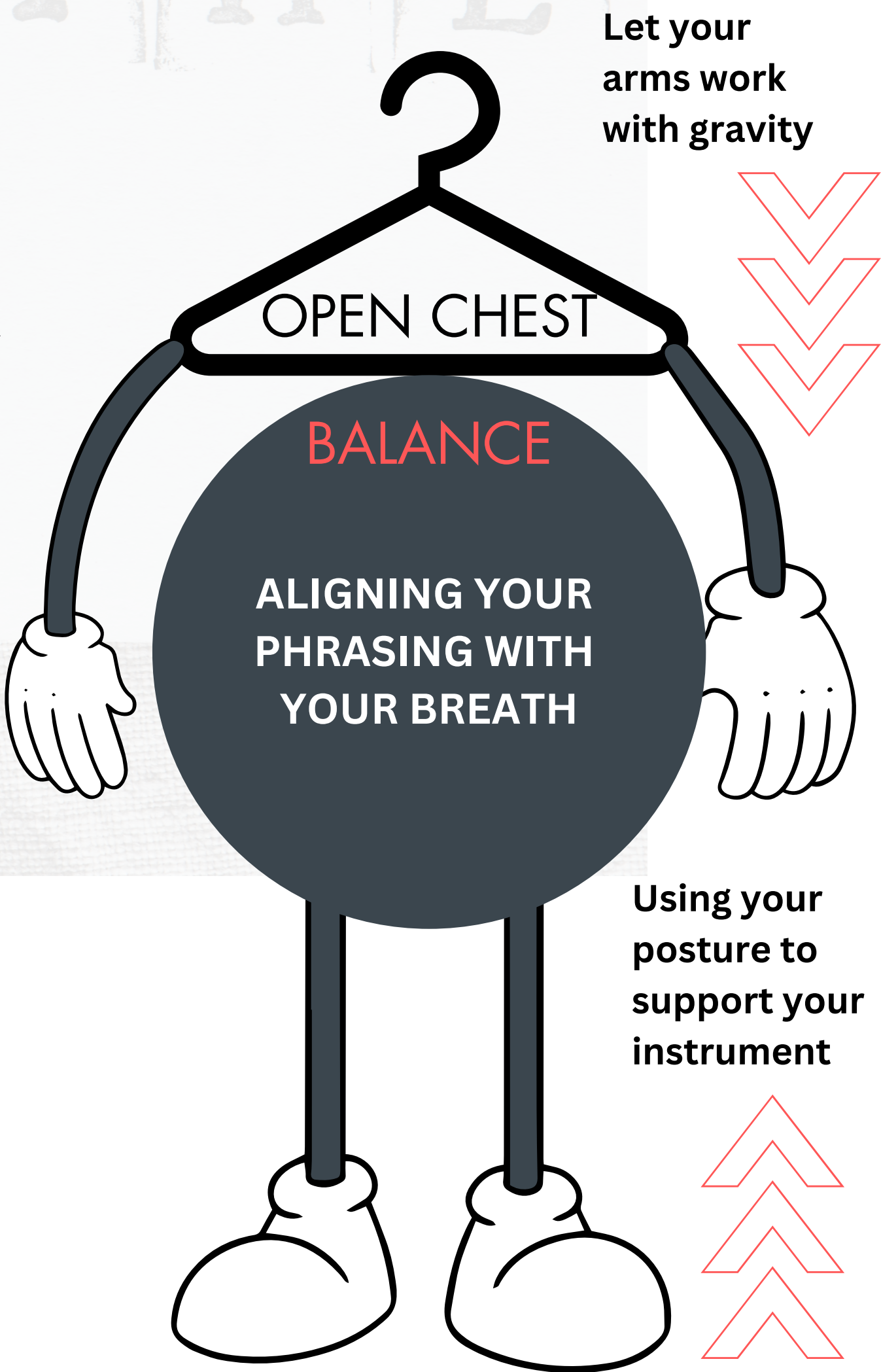
The goal is to play slowly, while still creating a consistent tone.

As you play, listen to your body:

Are there any areas of tension?
Are you breathing? If so, are you breathing from your diaphragm?

Start to experiment with changing the weight of the bow and the amount of bow hair you are using as you play.

What do you notice in the sound??



GETTING STARTED WITH SOUND JOURNALLING:

Connecting Our Head, Heart, and Hands

What is Sound journalling?

Sound Journalling is an activity that helps us to check-in with how we are coming into the practice room from our daily lives.

Sound Journalling

This music improvisation exercise will give you a chance to:

- 'settle in' to your instrument before having to focus on scales and technique
- Pay close attention to your posture, breathing and tone
- To set intentions and set clear goals about what type of sound you want to create on your instrument (ie/do you want a rich tone? Smooth, connecting and singing?)

Here Are the Three Steps of Sound Journalling:

- Choose a way to record your improvisation: whether with a phone, or digital recorder, recording your improvisation will help you to reflect on your improvisations throughout the week.
- Right, draw, or play whatever comes to mind This can be as short as 30 seconds, to 5 minutes--one note or twenty,
- Reflect on what you played: Whether its in written form, or audibly to yourself, use 1-3 words to describe the sound that you played. Was it a happy sounding? Tired? Or agitated? Make sure to record your responses.

At the end of your first week of practicing, listen back to your improvisations. What do you notice? Do you like the quality of your sound? Before going into to your next week of practicing this exercise, make goals for creating the sound you would like.

for example: to have smooth and connected bow changes

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Integrating Activities into Everyday Practice:



SCHEDULE IT OUT

"Consistency Gives Results"

In our lives, we have schedules for many things. Our class schedule, rehearsal schedule, assignment/homework schedule of due dates...do you have a schedule for your musical practice??

Marking in your practice in your daily schedule will help ensure that it gets done. Not only do schedules create accountability, but it helps us to develop a habit of practicing.

To help see results, schedule the above exercises in your daily practice.



TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

'Document the Journey'

To see if a new practice method is effective or to learn from the journey, we need to have a system of documentation. Whether that is by using your phone, or a digital recording device, recording our practice will give us a better sense of our sound and what we are communicating through our instruments.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

Change Comes In Small Steps--Not Leaps!

Last, but not least--remember to be kind to yourself!

Change does not happen over night. Take one practice session at a time. If you fall off track, set a new goal, schedule out your practice start the process again.

As much as we practice to achieve an end result, it is the journey and process that is truly transformative.

About Kathryn Patricia Cobbler



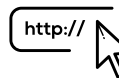
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[@kpviolist](https://www.facebook.com/kpviolist)



[Kathryn Patricia Cobbler](https://www.youtube.com/KathrynPatriciaCobbler)



www.kathrynpatricia.com



"for me, performing music is painting with sound,"

Hailing from Canada's Capital region, Loop pedal violist, composer, and educator Kathryn Patricia Cobbler has crafted a singular niche in improvisation and classical performance. She obsesses over creating uniquely arresting soundscapes, whether in solo recitals, composing for theatre, performing at art installations, and more. A recipient of one of Ottawa Arts Council's Emerging Artist awards, she has been featured in Canada's most notable Concert Series, including Chamberfest, Music and Beyond, NUMUS Music Festival, and the Ottawa New Music Creators' Analogue Series to name a few.

As a seasoned performer, speaker, presenter and workshop facilitator, Kathryn has given masterclasses at Carleton University and was a speaker for the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning Convergence Conference. As a performing artist and educator, Ms. Cobbler is an artist on the MASC Artist roster and Teaching Artist at the National Arts Centre. As a composer, Kathryn has been featured in the Boston based Concert series, Castle of Our Skin's Black Composers Miniature Challenge, which resulted in the world premier of her piece A Home Called 'Wander'. Kathryn continues to be inspired by the next generation of composers and improvisers, having served as an adjudicator for the Canadian Music Showcase and NUMUS Emerging Improvisor competition. Kathryn Patricia's most recent multidisciplinary collaboration was through an artist in residency with the Ottawa Dance Directive composing and collaborating for the premiere of Dream & True North envisioned and choreographed by Elizabeth Emond-Stevenson.

Initially a visual artist, Kathryn sees the world through shape and line—a vision that has laid the groundwork for many of her musical creative projects. Kathryn's current explorations of the loop pedal have led to the development of her workshop/concert, Sound In Living Colour, where she draws connection between the technical use of the paint brush and her viola bow, guiding her listeners through a music inspired painting experience. After switching to music as her artistic path, she would receive degrees in viola performance from Western University (B.M.) and the University of Ottawa (M.M.). Ms. Cobbler has also performed as an orchestral musician, appearing within the Toronto Symphony's Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, and the Ottawa Jazz Orchestra. A native of Windsor, Ontario, she makes her home in Ottawa. She performs on a viola by luthier Sibylle Ruppert and a Boss RC-30 loop pedal.