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Violin FAQs

Q How do I know what size of violin to get?

A There are a variety of sizes of violins for young students. If you are renting or buying an instrument through an instrument dealer, they will be able to help you determine the correct size of violin. A good rule of thumb is that a student should be able to put the violin up in playing position and wrap their hand around the scroll of the violin without stretching or locking their elbow. To get an idea of what size might be a good fit, have the student stand straight with their left arm held out horizontally with their palm facing upwards. Measure from the neck to the point where the wrist and hand meet. From that measurement, the recommended sizes of violins are below:

- 33 1/2 cm or less - 1/16 size
- 36 cm - 1/10 size
- 38 1/2 cm - 1/8 size
- 44 cm - 1/4 size
- 48 1/2 cm - 1/2 size
- 52 cm - 3/4 size
- 54 cm or more - full size

If the student is close to two different sizes, it is better to go with the smaller instrument. An instrument that is too large can cause injuries and frustration for a new student.

Q What equipment do I need to start violin lessons?

A The following are recommended to start:

- Rosin
- Shoulder Rest
- Music Stand
- Metronome
- Tuner
- Dictation book
- Binder with lined paper

Most violins come with a cake of rosin included with the violin case. This is needed to keep the hairs of the bow sticky enough to make a proper sound. Your instructor will help you to know when you need to add rosin to your bow. You will also need to buy a shoulder rest. There are many different types of shoulder rests available at a range of prices. Some standard models are the Kun shoulder rest or the Everest shoulder rest. You can find these at most music stores, or online at Amazon or even Kijiji. Finally, you should consider purchasing an inexpensive, adjustable music stand; posture is very important when learning string instruments to prevent injuries and to improve tone.

Q How long will it take before I can play music that I recognize on the violin?

A When you learn an instrument like a piano, you can make a sound right away by pressing a key. String instruments like the violin are different. Before you can make a sound on the instrument, you have to learn how to hold the violin and the bow and how to move the bow correctly to make a good sound. In the beginning, this will be as uncomfortable and awkward as the first time you learned to tie your shoes or to hold a pencil. It takes time to train your muscles to work in a completely new way. If you do your practicing right from the start, it won't be too long before you can start to make music. However, if you don't put in the work at the beginning, it will take much longer to train your hands and arms to move correctly, and you will find that your progress will be much slower. In that sense, the question of how long it will be before you play real music will be up to you!