



# *Katie Glassman's* **FIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **STARTER KIT**

### *UNIT 1*



#### **Welcome**

This first of four modules in the New Fiddler Starter Kit contains everything you need to know to begin playing fiddle, even if you've never touched the instrument before.

Go through these modules and take your time with them before you jump into Session 1. This first module takes less than 30 minutes to complete.

You can always find more support on [fiddleschool.com](http://fiddleschool.com) with private lessons, progress reports, consultations, and our online community. We're here for you.

#### **Fiddle Anatomy**

What's the difference between a violin and a fiddle? They're actually the same instrument. The only differences are the style of music and sometimes the way the instrument is set up. See the diagram in the PDFs of this lesson to learn and review terms for all the parts of your instrument.

## Rest Position

**Rest position** is how you'll hold your fiddle when you're not playing. To find rest position:

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with no armrests.
2. Hold the neck of your fiddle securely with your left hand and pick up your fiddle. Don't worry about the bow yet.
3. With the instrument facing away from you, take your fiddle and tuck the body gently under your right arm.  
*NOTE: never push or add any weight on top of the bridge. Your arm should go over the chin rest and tailpiece instead, without touching the bridge.*
4. Bring your forearm under the body to cradle it while you still hold the neck with your left hand. This is rest position.
5. Finally, hook your bow over your right index finger so that it hangs toward the floor whether you're standing or sitting. Always protect the tip and keep it off the floor and clear of other objects.

Now try **knee position**, which is what you'll do between rest position and playing position.

1. From rest position, keep your secure hold on the neck with your left hand.
2. Remove the fiddle from your right side and hold it upright on your left knee.

## How to Sit

Your bones were created for structure and your muscles were made for movement. If you use your muscles instead of your bones to create structure,

you'll feel a lot of unnecessary tension. Instead, build structure with your bones by following these steps.

1. Imagine yourself as a three-legged stool: your bum is one leg and each foot is another.
2. Place your feet directly under your knees and be sure that your legs are set slightly apart.
3. Rock back and forth on your sit bones. When you find center, straighten your spine, as if a string were pulling the top of your head toward the ceiling.

### **String Names, Finger Numbers**

- A traditional fiddle has four strings.
- From lowest- to highest-sounding, these strings are G, D, A, and E.
- To help remember the names, think of the phrase Great Danes Are Enormous.

Throughout Fiddle School, I refer to **finger numbers**. Your index finger is your first finger, or your 1. Your middle finger is your second finger, or your 2. Your ring finger is your third finger or your 3. Finally there's your pinky: your fourth finger, or your 4.

### **Fiddle Accessories**

You don't need many accessories to get started with the fiddle. Here's a list of my recommendations. There are links to purchase each item in the Materials menu of the Fiddle Lounge.

- **Tuners** allow you to get your fiddle exactly in tune. I recommend a clip-on electric violin tuner, especially the D'Addario brand. This is a must-have.
- **Rosin** is a cake of tree resin you'll use daily to condition your bow hair. I recommend Pirastro Goldflex rosin.
- For **strings**, I recommend Prim medium-tension violin strings. Be sure you buy the size that's right for your violin. For adults, look for full size or 4/4. For kids' violins, look for ¼, ½, or ¾ length strings, depending on the instrument.
- **Tapes** on your bow and fingerboard are key tools in Fiddle School. We recommend that you use car pinstriping tape. That's right: the kind you find at an auto parts store. It's durable and safe for your fiddle. Pick up a roll of 1/8th inch tape in a color that's easy to see.
- The best **shoulder rest** and **chin rest** varies depending on your anatomy and what feels good to you. For people with long necks, it often works well to use a shoulder rest/chin rest combination with a little more height. For people with shorter necks, shoulder pads or shorter shoulder rest/ chin rest combinations can feel more comfortable. *NOTE: If you want more guidance on how to find the right combination of shoulder rest and chin rest for you, we're available to help. To meet with a member of our team one-on-one, just click the link below this video.*