



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

**STARTER KIT**

*UNIT 3*



**Fiddle Posture: Head, Neck, and Jaw**

- Imagine your head is a ball balanced on top of your spine with a string pulling it toward the ceiling. Straighten your spine and tuck your chin ever so slightly.
- Trace your jaw with your right hand. Imagine that your fiddle is hugging your neck.
- Snuggle your jaw into your imaginary fiddle. Tilt your head slightly and turn it a little to the left.

Here are a couple points to look out for:

- **Never force your chin or neck forward to meet your fiddle.** Instead, always bring your fiddle to you and let it hug into your neck as close as it can.
- **Do not lean your head to the right.** The fiddle will always hug the *left* side of your neck, with your *left* jaw snuggling into the chin rest.

When you're not used to holding your fiddle yet, the instrument can feel uncomfortable against your body. This discomfort is brief and dissipates as you

get used to the fiddle. If you're still experiencing discomfort after a few weeks, you can schedule a consultation so we can help you adjust your setup/posture.

### **Fiddle Posture: Left Arm and Left Hand**

1. Your fiddle should be neither directly in front of you nor directly to the side. The ideal angle for your fiddle is right between these two extremes. At this angle, your fiddle and your bow will meet at a perfect 90-degree angle. Find this midway angle with your left arm, holding it parallel to the ground. *NOTE: use your back muscles (not the muscles on top of your shoulder) to lift your left arm to meet your fiddle. Using your back muscles here eliminates tension and protects your body in the long run.*
2. Turn your palm to face the ceiling and take your right hand to your left elbow.
3. As you begin to bend your left elbow, use your hand to pull that elbow gently in towards your body as your left hand rotates clockwise. Now your left elbow is bent slightly in front of your torso. Your left hand is rotated with the wrist straight, palm facing outward to the left.
4. Imagine holding a ball in your left palm. Round your fingers around the ball and feel your palm become slightly concave. Keep your wrist straight.
5. Straighten your spine, tuck your chin, and imagine your fiddle coming in to hug your neck and snuggle your jaw.

### **Fiddle Balance**

To practice your fiddle posture with your instrument:

1. Start in knee position with your left hand holding the body of the fiddle, the fiddle facing away from you.
2. Imagine that string pulling your head to the ceiling, straighten your spine and tuck your chin slightly. Bring your fiddle in to hug your neck and snuggle your jaw. Turn your head just slightly.
3. Rest the fiddle on your shoulder, snuggle it into your jaw and hug it into your neck. Then **use the weight of your head, not your left hand, to hold your fiddle on your shoulder.** 90% of the support for your fiddle comes from your shoulder and jaw, while only 10% comes from support in your left hand.
4. **Practicing over a bed for safety, bring your left hand away from the fiddle and down to your knee for one second,** holding the fiddle with only your jaw and your shoulder. Have your right hand on standby in case you need it. Then bring your left hand back to the neck of the fiddle.
5. Try this for a little longer on each repetition to practice supporting the fiddle with your head and jaw. Practice this for no longer than one minute at a time to avoid straining your muscles.

### **Fiddle Posture: Left Hand**

For open string playing position:

1. Place your left hand on the fiddle. Bring the fiddle to your neck and snuggle it in.
2. Place your left thumb on the neck of the fiddle near the body and use it to hoist your palm above the body of the fiddle.

3. Pull your elbow under the instrument to gently twist your forearm and palm towards the fiddle. Be sure the fiddle is not resting on the webbing between your thumb and index finger.
4. Imagine that you are holding a ball and round your palm and fingers around that ball. Notice how your fingertips point towards the strings. This is your open string playing position.

## **Let's Play**

To play your first notes:

1. Create your straight spine and bring your fiddle into knee position. From here, bring your fiddle to hug your neck and snuggle your jaw.
2. Follow the steps above to get into open string playing position. Straighten your wrist and relax your body.
3. Set your bow on the strings, round your thumb, curl your first finger around the stick, let your second finger hang, pet the eye of the frog with your third finger, and gently round your pinky on the wood of the stick.
4. Set your bow on the A string at the bottom sticker. Now open the door to pull a down bow. Close the door to push an up bow.
5. When you're ready, try connecting the bows. Start by connecting four down bows and four up bows. The point here isn't to sound perfect; it's to enjoy the feeling of playing and making sounds with your instrument.