

# 4 TIPS

— FOR —



## BEGINNING VIOLINISTS



Beginner Bootcamp

*Mini*

# My Top 4 Tips for Beginning Violinists

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## 1. Build a solid foundation

Do you know that kind of patient, hard-working people? Those people that seem to be able to perform routine tasks for multiple hours every day without blinking an eye? That set a schedule and follow it exactly as listed? And, not to mention: whenever they are taking a class they are performing the given exercises EXACTLY as the teacher told them to do?

This is, what I call, the perfect classical violinist. (If you are one of them: congratulations! You are destined for greatness.)

**I am definitely NOT one of them!**

I am more like... one of those over-enthusiastic, nerdy and chaotic kind of people. Whenever I start to learn anything new, from an instrument to building my own websites, I want to dive into it full force. And for me that means: discovering everything new and exciting RIGHT NOW.

Concentrating and polishing up one song for several weeks and refining my exact technique? No way. I am way too curious about all the other songs in the book.

Unfortunately, my experience with both learning instruments myself and teaching music, teaches me that this is not the most efficient nor the most effective way to learn an instrument.

**I found out first hand, how important it is to take your time to get the basics right.**

Because I rushed through songs and always wanted to learn something else that sounded more exciting, I still made very foundational beginner mistakes after years of playing.

And yes, I DID have to correct them and let me tell you: it wasn't easy. (Confessing: I am even working on some of the same mistakes to this day)

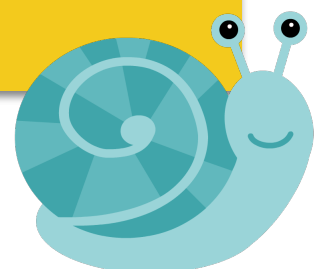
And guess what I found out?

**When learning music, it is way harder to change a bad habit, than to teach yourself a good habit from the very start.**

Why I am sharing all of this with you? Well...you probably guessed already. I simply don't want you to make the same mistake that I did. Instead, try to incorporate good habits from the very start. Here are a few tips, to make sure you won't fall into the same trap:

## TIPS

- \* Carefully follow every instruction in this course.
- \* Study each lesson thoroughly before going to the next lesson.
- \* Review & correct yourself BEFORE moving on to the next lesson



## 2. Take your time

So I just told you about my, well ...great start at learning how to play the violin.

Even though I probably was one of the most unfocussed violin students in my class, I somehow managed to keep practicing and playing the violin year after year. I also taught myself to play the guitar and the piano, which magically transformed me into a better violin player too. I even developed much more discipline over the years and could concentrate on practicing scales for more than an hour at some point.

Every year, I did get a tiny little bit better at the violin. I never really noticed I was getting any better and honestly, never considered myself to be a good violin player at all. I have never been one of those people that are very convinced of themselves. It wasn't until people asked me if they could please pay me to play at events for them, that I realised in some way I did manage to learn some valuable skills during the past years. I became an improvisational/ folk violin player in bands and a music teacher, and to this day I can not imagine a job that would be more fun.

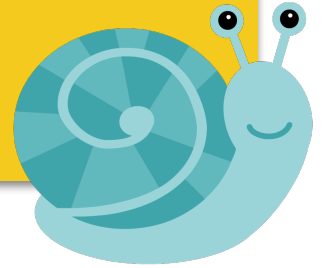
The point that I want to come across is the following:

**Getting a good violin player depends on long term, consistent practice instead of getting quick results.**

So, don't be afraid if you don't see progress right away. I literally didn't notice I was getting any better for years, and at some point I randomly got jobs as a violinist. Don't worry if it takes some time to move forward to your next song or next "new" technique. Learning the violin is a challenge and challenging things always take time!

## TIPS

- \* Be patient with yourself
- \* Be patient with yourself
- \* Be patient with yourself
- \* Hell yes! Be patient with yourself!!!!



Alright, I think you understood it by now.

### 3. Honour your unique gifts

As I previously mentioned, I was quite terrible at practicing, I never really listened to my teachers enough and I had a hard time focusing on my exercises.

You know what? I always felt kind of guilty –for being a violinist like that. I remember to admire some of my friends, that seemed to be studying concentratively for hours and hours –they were no doubt the best young violinists in the city where I grew up. It also didn't help me that both of my parents were music teachers –that kind of music teachers that really value the kind of student I certainly...was not.

So I regularly told myself that I should change: “Right now, I am going to do the exact exercises my teacher gave me, practice 3 hours a day, and become the most disciplined classical violin player on this entire planet.” (or something like that)

The truth was, that I was pushing myself way too hard to be something I am not. I am not that disciplined and structured classical violin student, but I do manage to practice intensively for 2 months at a time. I might never become that orchestra violinist with the perfect technique, but I did become that happy fiddler in the corner of a pub. I am also not very serious about practicing, but I do love to share my passion for music with other people. I am not a perfectionist, but I love thinking out big creative projects and make them happen. (Yes, you are part of one of them right now: Violinspiration).

And what I found out, is that my fellow musicians and students, actually really LIKE that about me. (If you would have told me this only 3 years ago, I would have laughed at you). Some people even

wanted to take lessons with me, because I was NOT that kind of violinist I looked up too.

This brought me to the following conclusion:

## You are exactly the violinist you need to be

The violinist that still plays the easiest beginners songs after years, but always finds himself incredibly relaxed after playing. The violinist that always plays out of tune, but is able to give an incredible performance on stage. The late starter that inspires everyone around them to follow through on a long neglected dream. The violinist that actually also plays 5 other instruments and can not choose. The violinists that has perfect rhythm and can play for dances like no one else. The violinist that can not play sheet music, but knows more than 20 songs by heart. The violinist that can show the joy of music to young children. The violinist that dances while playing....and the list goes on.

You don't need to play Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with accurate to the Hz. intonation, have a picture perfect bow hold and practice 3 hours a day straight. You can be an awesome violinist WITHOUT all of that.

One of the things I love most about teaching, is to see that literally all students have some special talents, whether that is having great rhythm or sharing the beauty of music with their kids.

Don't ever forget that ALL of us musicians have something to add to this world. (If you have any problems with that: simply imagine what the world would look like if all people would come together and dance and play together.)

We violinists bring light, enjoyment, wonder and fairytales to this world.

And no, we shouldn't all be THAT classical violinist in order to make the world even a tiny bit more beautiful with our art.

## TIPS

\* Never forget that as a violinist, you can share light, joy and wonder with this world. No matter which level you are!



## 4. Enjoy the Journey

On about every party or event I am playing, there is at least one person coming up to me that is telling me one of the following two things:

1. "I wished I learned the violin when I was young. Unfortunately I am too old now."
2. "It's a shame that I am so unmusical, because I would have loved to be able to play the violin"

I always wondered what these people meant with "too old" or "too unmusical". Do they mean that it is improbable they will ever become a world-class violinist, touring around with the top orchestra's in the world? In that case I would definitely agree with them. Though, I don't think they are talking about that. I believe most of them, think it would be impossible to have fun playing the violin, just because they don't believe they will become insanely good at it.



I am sure you are not one of those people. In that case, you wouldn't be taking this violin course. Thumbs up for you! But I do want to remember you to not fall into this trap that many violinists fall into: the idea that if only you were better at playing the violin, you would enjoy playing more.

Why? Because it simply won't work that way. Since I grew up in a family of musicians –with a large circle of friends that were also all musicians, I was surrounded with people that were extremely good at their instrument pretty much every day. And guess what? They always felt like they were not good enough yet. And they always told me they should practice more.

Some of my students at home, wanted to first develop a great technique BEFORE playing any of the songs they enjoyed most. Others only wanted to join a band, after they would be “good enough”. If you are one of those people, let me be clear with you:

You will NEVER feel like you are good enough, and you will ALWAYS find a reason why you should practice more. Although I have never asked them personally, I am sure that even world-class violinists like Janine Janssen or Hilary Hahn are still practicing to improve their technique. Since, well, you can never never really “finish” learning an instrument.

But, all of that won't mean that you can not have loads of fun when learning the violin.

You see, the fact that you can not “finish” learning the violin, is one of the most beautiful parts of it. There are always new opportunities for growth, discovery and excitement.

Which brings us to the following point that I am trying to make:

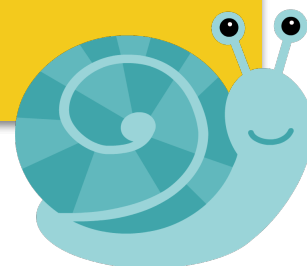
## The joy of learning the violin, lies in the journey.

So find ways in which practicing becomes fun for you. Try to enjoy your skills that you have right now as much as you can, by starting a band with others that are just starting out, composing your own songs with 2 fingers and playing beginner songs that you actually enjoy. Set crazy goals for yourself and go for them, take violin “holidays” and visit music camps and take lessons with a teacher that makes you smile. Not only because it is so much more fun, but also because if we feel genuinely excited, it is much easier to stay motivated to practice in the long run.

Keep doing this, and then, maybe one day, you suddenly wake up and realise you have actually become an incredibly good violinist!

### TIPS

- \* Don't hold yourself back to enjoy playing in company of others, because you are “not good enough”. The truth is, you will never feel like you are!
- \* Ask yourself: how can I make the journey of the violin more enjoyable for myself?



## Conclusion

Learning the violin is quite a journey.

A journey of self-discovery and self-growth. A journey that will lead you into new friendships, to new places and to complete new life experiences. A journey of creative self-expression. It will make you laugh and it will make you cry. Sometimes it will make you feel like you are on top of the world, other days you will feel defeated.

I know it isn't always easy. Learning the violin can be challenging, difficult and at times downward frustrating. In the end: on which other instrument is it possible to practice daily for several months and still sound terrible? You get it. But trust me: it will be worth it. And you WILL see results, eventually.

You know, you are probably not one of those people that want to go the easy route anyway. At least, there are a lot of fun things to do in this universe that are a LOT easier than learning how to play the violin.

**I guess we violin players have at least one thing in common: that we are not afraid to go for a big, challenging dream and make it into reality, no matter what it takes.**

Let's make that dream of you happen, **RIGHT NOW!**



— *Julia's* —  
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