

Vibrato Exercise: Rubber Knuckle String Polish

Beautiful and expressive viola playing includes many things, and for the developing violist, definitely the ability to let notes shimmer and intensify through **vibrato**! Here is a simple and effective exercise to increase flexibility in the left finger knuckle joints—most necessary for great arm and/or wrist vibrato.

Rubber Knuckle String Polish

With the viola in playing position, rest the 1st finger lightly (*harmonic touch*) on the D string in first position and begin to **POLISH** the string up and down from first position to much higher positions and back. Now begin to engage your **RUBBER KNUCKLE** by straightening and sinking the 1st finger top knuckle joint towards the string when you downward polish (*maintain harmonic touch*). On the upward polish, keep your *Rubber Knuckle* relaxed, but bend it into normal playing position. Continue polishing up and down, feeling the flexibility in your knuckles as you bend and sink them in each direction.

Do this exercise with all the fingers and eventually move it to all the strings. Notice if any knuckles are especially tight....

This important concept of *rubber knuckles* helps all the vibrato motions in your arm and hand to travel into the string.



Upward polish=square knuckles



Downward polish=sunken knuckles



Originally from Lake Mills, Wisconsin, violist **Kathryn Dey** is active as a soloist and chamber musician and has performed extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Ms. Dey is a Surdna Foundation fellow and was awarded a grant from that organization to study and perform works for unaccompanied viola by Lillian Fuchs. She performs regularly with organist David Turner as *The Lila Duo* and recent projects include a guest artist residency at the Zanmi Lasante school in Haiti and a series of recitals in France and Germany. Together the duo founded the *Haiti Music Project*, an outreach program connecting musicians in the United States and Cange, Haiti. She is principal violist of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra.

Active as an educator, her teaching has been recognized by the American String Teacher Association, *Strings Magazine*, Music Teachers National Association, the American Viola Society, the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education, and the South Carolina Music Educators Association. Students from her studio are now performing and teaching around the world. Ms. Dey is on the faculty of the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts, the Eastman Summer Viola Workshop and the Swannanoa Chamber Music Festival. She earned degrees in viola performance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a student of Sally Chisholm, and at the Eastman School of Music, where she served as teaching assistant to John Graham.