

# 14

Ensure the left-hand fingers don't press the strings down too hard, especially when playing louder. Use just the minimum pressure required. To discover this minimum pressure level, do the following-

- Put a left-hand finger down on a note.
- Now release the pressure exerted by that finger, so that it is just resting on the string.
- Start bowing the string. The fact that your finger is just resting on the string will mean that the sound will be rather unpleasant.
- While still bowing, very slowly increase the pressure exerted by the left hand finger until a clear note can be heard. This will be the minimum pressure required.
- Now play that note with long bows, short bows, loudly and softly, all the time remembering to maintain the same pressure with the left hand finger.
- Try this exercise with different fingers.

# 15

The fiddle is an ideal instrument for executing slides – a staple technique for the traditional fiddler. A slide, as the name implies, involve sliding the finger up or down the string (usually up), gradually altering the pitch of the note.

To play a rising slide, choose a note to slide up to. Put the finger down in a lower (flatter) position than it would be to normally play that note. Play the “out-of-tune” note and slide up to the desired note. Be careful not to overshoot beyond the destination note.

The descending slide should be used with more caution. Rather than sliding down to a desired note, this technique is normally used to achieve the effect of “falling away” from the main note.

The most common is the slide that moves up to a destination note. Generally speaking, North American fiddlers use a longer slide than those from Ireland or Scotland. That is they start from a flatter, or lower sounding note.