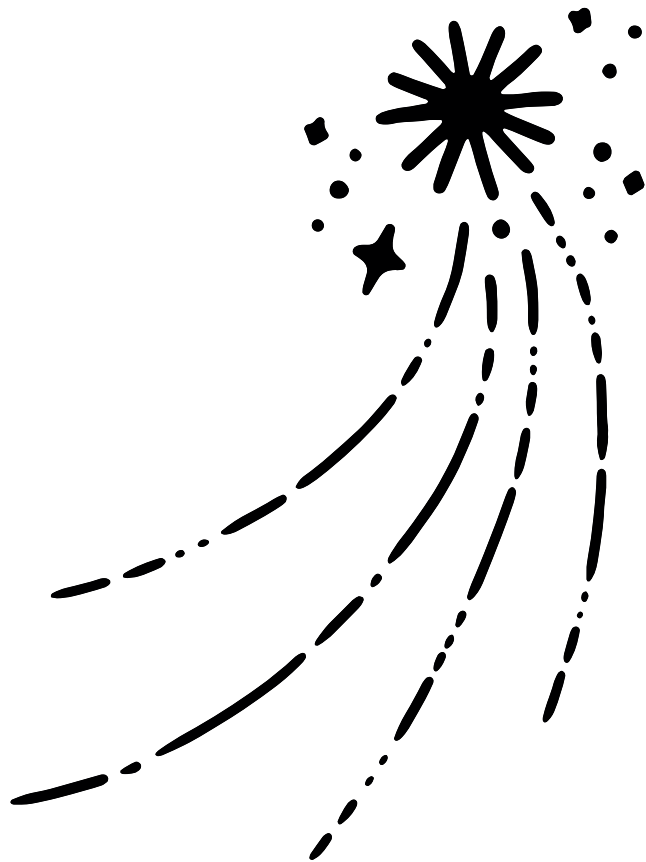


# Magic Moves

Explanations and flashcards



Rebecca Jansen

# Magic Moves

Magic Moves are preparatory exercises designed to establish healthy postural and technical habits.

I recommend introducing all the Magic Moves in the first lesson, except for those that are specific to the left or right hand (These can be introduced slightly later). Then, ask students to cut out the flashcards at the back of the book to practice at home. I usually spend a few minutes at the start of each lesson recapping the exercises with my own set of flashcards.

## Without the Cello

### Shoulder Drop

Have the student stand or sit tall with a relaxed posture. Ask them to scrunch their shoulders up toward their ears, then release the tension and allow the shoulders to drop. Encourage them to maintain this relaxed feeling while playing. You can also have them practice with their arms in playing position, on or off the cello.

### Grandfather Clock

Have the student relax the entire arm and let it hang freely from the shoulder. Ask them to swing the arm forward and backward, then side to side, like a pendulum. Keep the shoulder heavy and passive.

### Armchair

Have the student lift their arm, bent at the elbow, as if resting on the arm of a chair. Support the arm at the elbow and wrist. Encourage the student to fully relax the arm into your hands. Move the arm side to side and in circles to promote complete relaxation and freedom of movement in the shoulder.

### Free Fall

Set up as in Armchair. Once the student's arm is fully relaxed in your hands, remove your support and allow the arm to drop heavily with gravity.

### Chicken Wing

Have the student bend both arms at the elbows and rest them by their sides. Ask them to raise and lower each elbow like a chicken flapping its wings. Encourage the elbows to drop naturally with gravity rather than actively pushing them down.

### Door on a Hinge

Have the student hold their arms out to the sides with relaxed shoulders. Ask them to open and close the forearm from the elbow joint, like a door swinging on a hinge. The movement should come from the elbow only, with the upper arm and shoulder remaining still.

### Wing on a Hinge

Have the student alternate between four chicken-wing motions and four door-on-a-hinge motions. Then repeat with three of each, two of each, and one of each. Keep the arm and shoulder relaxed throughout.

## **With the Cello**

### **Cello Hugs**

Have the student sit in playing position with their cello. Ask them to wrap their arms around the front of the cello, crossing over the fingerboard as if giving it a hug. Ensure their back stays tall and relaxed. Guide them to gently sway side to side with the cello to explore dynamic balance.

### **Fingerboard Bird**

From the Cello Hug position, have the student open their arms slightly so their hands gently grab around the fingerboard. Ask them to flap their elbows up and down like a bird, keeping the shoulders relaxed and heavy.

### **Fingerboard Knocks**

Have the student form a loose fist with their hand. With a floppy wrist and flexible arm, guide them to gently knock on the fingerboard using the front of the knuckles. Ask them to knock up and down the fingerboard while maintaining a smooth, relaxed motion. Focus on allowing the wrist to initiate the knocking.

### **Slap Bass**

Ask the student to slap the top of the fingerboard - near the scroll - with their palm, so the strings can be heard slapping against the fingerboard. Then have them slap the bottom of the fingerboard - near the bridge. Alternate between top and bottom slaps in this rhythm: slow – slow – slow – fast – fast – fast – slow – slow – slow.

Practice with both hands, maintaining a free, relaxed motion throughout.

### **Ski Jumps**

Have the student hook the fingers of their left hand onto the right side of a string. Guide them to slide down the full length of the fingerboard, then pluck the string by flinging the arm away in one smooth, relaxed motion. Ensure the palm faces outward as the hand flings away. Try this with both arms.

## **Left Hand**

### **Soda Can**

Have the student hold out their left hand as if holding a soda can, forming a soft “C” shape with the fingers. Ask them to bring their hand up to their mouth as if taking a sip. This helps reinforce the left-hand shape used for cello playing.

### **Finger Pops**

Have the student form a small circle with the tip of a finger and thumb. Ask them to tap the tips together to make a popping sound. Repeat with all fingers.

### **Head Scratcher**

Have the student scratch the top of their head with their left hand. This encourages proper alignment between hand, wrist, and elbow, which is ideal for cello playing.

## Right Hand

### Magic Circle

Have the student flip their right hand so the palm is facing up. Ask them to touch the tip of their thumb to the middle segment of the middle finger to create a small circle. Keep the thumb gently curved, not squeezing, and allow the hand to stay relaxed and soft.

### Pivot 1

Turn the student's right hand palm-up and lay a pencil across the middle segment of the middle finger. Without changing the shape of the hand, place the tip of the thumb on the pencil opposite the middle finger, forming a magic circle around it. Flip the hand over and have the student hold the pencil with the first and fourth fingers sticking up. Using their left hand, lift the tip of the pencil until it touches the index finger. Then lower the tip until the other end touches the baby finger. The right hand should remain passive throughout.

### Pivot 2

Have the student hold the pencil as above with the first and fourth fingers extended. Keeping the pencil parallel to the ground, raise the elbow and pronate the hand until the index finger touches the stick. Then lower the elbow and supinate until the baby finger makes contact.

### Wiggly Pencil

Have the student hold the pencil using a magic circle with their thumb and middle finger, just like in the bow hold. Then ask them to wiggle their thumb to make the pencil "wiggle" up and down like a see-saw.

### Rubber Band Bounces

Create a Magic Circle with the student's right thumb and middle finger. Hook their index finger around a rubber band held in the air by the teacher. Gently bounce up and down on the rubber band while keeping the Magic Circle relaxed and soft. Ask the student to feel the resistance in the right arm as they bounce.

### Pencil Bow Hold

Turn the student's right hand palm-up and lay a pencil across the middle segment of the middle finger. Without changing the hand shape, place the tip of the thumb on the pencil opposite the middle finger, forming a Magic Circle around it. Keep the thumb softly curved, not squeezing. Then flip the hand over and allow the other fingers to drape lightly and naturally over the pencil.

### Drawing

Have the student make a pencil bow hold with the tip pointing to the left. Pronate the arm so the tip of the pencil points down, then draw the alphabet on a piece of paper, maintaining a relaxed and pronated bow hold throughout.

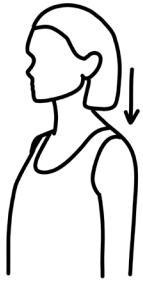
### Balancing Act

Have the student find the balance point of the bow and place the right thumb underneath the stick at that point. Gently lift the bow and see how long they can keep it balanced in the air. For added challenge, try having them balance the bow with the thumb at the corner of the frog.

### Bow Freeze

Have the student make a bow hold on the bow. Place the bow on the string at the balance point and ask the student to freeze for 10 seconds whilst maintaining a proper bow hold.

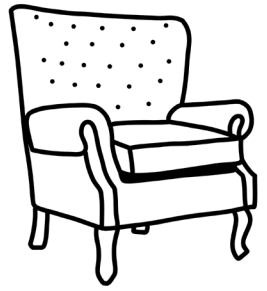
Shoulder Drop



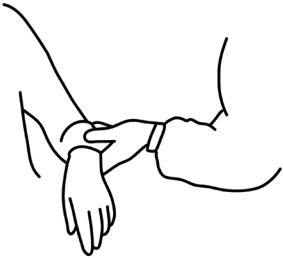
Grandfather Clock



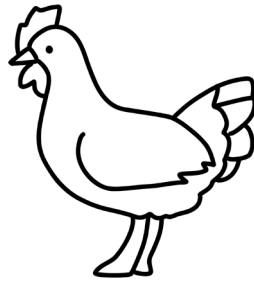
Armchair



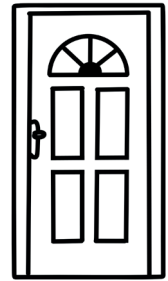
Free Fall



Chicken Wing



Door on a Hinge



Wing on a Hinge



Cello Hugs



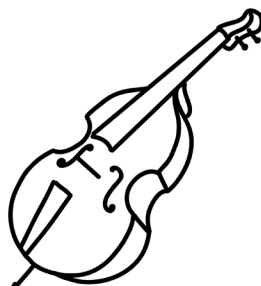
Fingerboard Bird



Fingerboard Knocks



Slap Bass



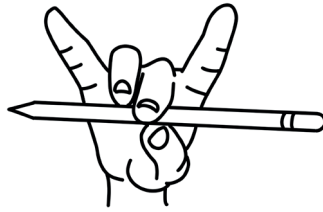
Ski Jumps



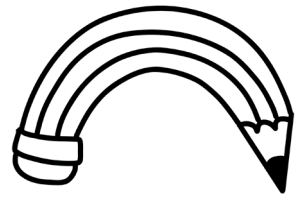
Magic Circle



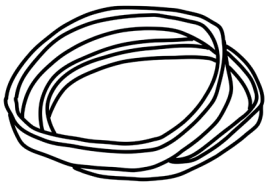
Pivot



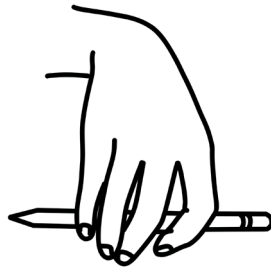
Wiggly Pencil



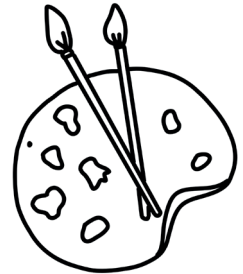
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Pencil Bow Hold



Drawing



Balancing Act



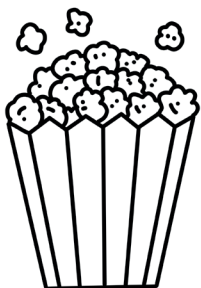
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Finger Pops



Head Scratcher

