

fabulous friday  
flyer

HOUSTON  
AREA  
SUZUKI  
STRINGS  
ASSOCIATION

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Even a knee injury can't keep us away from HASSA group class! The fundamentals of posture are just as important when playing sitting down. Just ask any cellist!

## FUNdamental Friday, November 22, 2013

### fun·da·men·tal.

fəndə'mentl/ adjective: forming a necessary base or core; of central importance. affecting or relating to the essential nature of something or the crucial point about an issue.  
noun: a central or primary rule or principle on which something is based.

### Fundamentals Start With Natural Posture

by Paula E. Bird

The fundamentals of playing well

begin with the best natural posture possible. Posture is the way in which the body is held for a particular activity. Good posture is crucial to other areas in addition to the playing of a musical instrument. If you were to enter "posture" as a Google search term, you will immediately see that there are many links that promise to explain how good posture will improve your general health. I believe that good posture also affects our mental and emotional state as well. Let me explain why.

For the moment, sit in a chair and close your eyes. Imagine what it feels like to be incredibly sad. Notice how your body responds to this thought. I'm guessing that you lowered your head forward, your

**Next Class:**  
**January 24, 2014**

Forte Friday! Wear a loud shirt, something soft, an ensemble that crescendos in color... just be dynamic!



"Do not hurry. This is a fundamental rule. If you hurry and collapse or tumble down, nothing is achieved. Do not rest in your efforts; this is another fundamental rule. Without stopping, without haste, carefully taking a step at a time forward will surely get you there."  
-Shinichi Suzuki from Nurtured by Love (pg. 45)

on the web at [www.hassa.org](http://www.hassa.org)

## Check out these upcoming HASSA events!

December 7  
HOLIDAY CONCERT AT  
OLD TOWN SPRING  
Put on your Santa hat and  
play Christmas music!

January 18  
WINTER WORKSHOP  
This promises to be the  
event of the year!  
Application deadline:  
Nov. 30, 2013

January 24  
FABULOUS FRIDAY  
GROUP CLASS  
Forte Friday!

March 29  
Spring Musicale

April 12  
Ribbon Festival Wonderful  
opportunity to receive a  
written critique of a solo  
performance.

April 26  
HASSA Graduation  
Concert.

May 3  
Spring Workshop with  
Doris Preucil

more information at  
[www.hassa.org](http://www.hassa.org)

## Fundamentals, continued from page 1

face muscles loosened and slid forward, your torso sagged into itself and forward, your shoulders slumped and drooped forward, and you felt your upper body take on additional heavy weight. This is how sad, depressed, and unconfident people generally carry themselves, and probably a reason why they feel so heavy and burdened.

Now try the flip side. Instead of feeling sad, imagine that you are the happiest you have ever been. Notice how your eyes "brightened," your facial cheeks lifted upwards, your shoulders pulled up and back, your torso lifted up out of the rib cage, and you sat up straighter. You feel so much lighter. While you are in this position, notice if there are areas that could be better balanced and centered. Is your heavy head resting perfectly balanced on the spinal column? Are your shoulders really up and back? Is your torso lifted out of the rib cage? Are your hips tilted in a way that spills your guts forward, or are they tilted upward a little to keep your energy level contained and

comfortable? These are all important considerations.

I am a huge fan of Cesar Milan and his "Dog Whisperer" show on the National Geographic Channel (showing on Friday nights). As a teacher I have found Cesar's observations regarding posture and the use of energy to be particularly helpful. As teachers we are more than just the person who teaches the student how to play the violin. I believe that teachers have a higher obligation to help the student to discover themselves and learn the best way to improve and teach themselves, for ultimately the final goal is to teach the student to be his or her own teacher.



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## The Music Mind Games Corner

### MMG Cornerstones



When practicing, repeat your cornerstones aloud using "I" instead of "you" to reinforce the concepts and motivate yourself for active learning.

### 4. Small, successful steps are a normal way to learn.

Each step we learn is a building block to the next. Thorough mastery of each concept gives you a strong foundation to build upon as you try more advanced skills and concepts.



singing "daily do"

### 5. Is something confusing? Your teacher can try another way.

Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help. Everyone has different learning styles. Some are more kinesthetic, more verbal or more auditory. If you need another explanation or a different way of looking at the information, let your teacher know, so they can give you some new ideas on how to approach your lesson and your practice.

More MMG Cornerstones next time...