

Introduction to Violin Scales with Kristin Baird

If you've found this page, congratulations! That means you're either curious about what scales are or how you can improve your own playing with scales. And THAT is how you get one step closer to improving as both a musician and a violinist. This handout covers the general information that you will find in each video.

However before we talk about what each video contains, let's talk about what needs to happen BEFORE you play your scales. These are three things that are not incorporated into the lessons, but we should still incorporate into our playing:

1. Tune your instrument with a tuner or a drone. In tune open strings give us the best shot at playing the notes in tune and with a *ringing, beautiful tone*.
2. Warm up by either playing open strings, play the tonalization exercises also on the TFO virtual learning page, or both! Tonalization exercises are designed to get the instrument ringing as much as possible. I can not express how important this is. **Check out “*But First, Tone*” for an overview of the importance of tone when practicing our scales.**

Always aim for a beautiful, ringing tone..as in ALWAYS, forever and ever, whatever you're playing, aim for a beautiful, ringing tone. ♥

3. Since the videos are done only in half notes and with no variations in rhythm or bowing, the left hand is usually the first thing I tackle in the videos. **Make sure to also practice the “*Variations on a Scale: Developing the Bow Arm*” for different rhythms and bowings that challenge the right side of the body.**

Each video has a handout that follows along with that specific scale.

Section 1: Introduction

- The introduction will state the objectives or what we aim to accomplish by the end of the video.

Section 2: Play through the scale the first time

- I try to play through the scale within the first minute of the video. The music will always appear at the bottom of the screen in half notes with a drone and a metronome in the background. ♩ = 60

Section 3: Identify the TLC notes

- “TLC” notes are the notes that likely need the most attention or “tender, love and care.” This is usually centered around a finger pattern that might be tricky for a new player like a high or low two, or it could be isolation of a shift, for example, in the more advanced scales.

Section 4: Play through the scale for a second time

Section 5: Miscellaneous

- This might be a new vocabulary word, we might sing the scale, or this might work on right hand technique topics for intermediate to advanced scales.

Section 6: Play through the scale for the final time

The “**Pro Tip Today**” is usually just a small reminder that doesn't need a lot of explanation but we often forget to incorporate in our playing. For example, at the beginning level scales this might be as simple as “hold your instrument parallel to the ground” or “make sure to use a legato, smooth bow.” Intermediate or advanced scales might be something like “tap your left thumb to make sure you're not squeezing” or “make sure to not to hold tension in your neck and chin.”