

How to Play with Dynamics

What are dynamics? – In music, we use the word dynamics to describe the different volume fluctuations in a piece of music. We can play louder (*forte*) dynamics or softer (*piano*) dynamics.

Why should we play with dynamics? – Using a wide range of dynamics gives us an opportunity to create magical moments in music. We can show the passion and intensity of music by playing it louder or softer. We can also change the “coloring” of the sound on our instruments. When we play louder the sound might get more focused like a laser beam, and when we play softer we can hear the woody sound of the instrument-it almost sounds like a person whispering.

How to change dynamics:

1. Change bow speed – Draw your bow across the string at a faster speed or slower speed. Faster bow speed generally creates a louder sound.
2. Change the amount of arm “weight” – Let your arm sink deeper into the string for more volume, or lighten up the arm weight so your bow is floating on the string for a softer sound. Try not to press the bow down into the string since this can stop the string from vibrating-it’s better to let the arm weight sink in the way your arm naturally sinks into an arm rest-you never push your arm into an arm rest.
3. Change the bow placement closer or farther from the bridge – Bring your bow closer to the bridge for a louder, more focused sound. Let it go closer to the fingerboard for a soft, airy sound.

Try the following dynamic exercises:

1. As you go up the scale, use a slower bow speed to make a softer sound



2. As you go up the scale, use more arm weight to make a stronger sound



3. Keep your bow right in the middle between the end of the fingerboard and the bridge- look in a mirror to check in

