

Contact Points: Left Hand

In this topic, we look at how the contact points between your left hand and the violin affect how comfortable you feel when playing. Being comfortable when playing the violin is very important, as it allows us to enjoy making music without the distraction of feeling tense or uncomfortable.

What is a contact point?

A contact point is any place at which your body touches something else. While you read this, your legs might have contact points with your seat. Your feet may have contact points with the ground.

In this topic, we'll talk about where your left hand touches the violin, and how that affects the way you play.

Why are contact points important?

The points where your left hand touches the violin can change many things about your playing. Different points can be more or less comfortable. Using contact points with too much pressure can make it harder to move your hands and arms freely. How your left hand touches the violin and how those contact points change as you play can create completely different feelings in the hand, which then affect the sound you make.

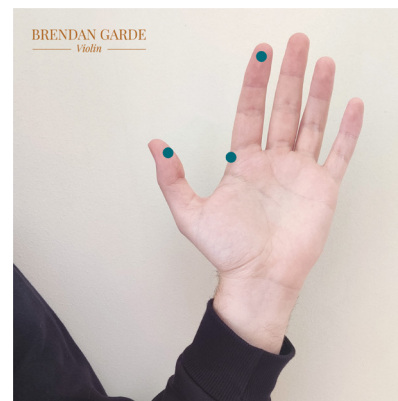
What does this mean for me?

Knowing which contact points you use and why means you can control your hand movements more easily. The most important thing is to know **when** you create these contact points, **when** they change and **why** they change. The aim is to find what works for you personally.

Where are my left-hand contact points?

There are 3 main contact points between your left hand and your violin:

1. The pad of your thumb against the neck of the violin.
2. The base of your index (pointing) finger against the neck of the violin *
3. The tips or pads of whichever fingers are on the fingerboard.



* Depending on what feels best for them, some players choose not to use this contact point. We often remove it when doing vibrato and some violinists (like Augustin Handeliich) don't use it as a contact point at all. They do not touch the base of their index (pointing) finger against the neck of the violin. When using this contact point, be sure to use it gently - try the lightest amount of pressure you can get away with!

When we play in higher positions on the fingerboard, like 5th/6th position, we don't use this contact point at the base of our index (pointing) finger.

What do I do now?

The most important thing is to be aware of your contact points.

Complete this exercise to find out which contact points you use:

1. While you're playing, look at your left hand and see where it touches the violin. Get a friend or family member to help you write down these contact points while you're practicing. Are they always the same contact points? Do they change, maybe when you change position? Are they pressing hard or softly against the violin? Does your hand feel comfortable?
2. Close your eyes while you play and feel which different parts of your left hand touch the violin. Are they always the same contact points? Do they change, maybe when you change position? Are they pressing hard or gently against the violin? What feels most comfortable?