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# **THE CELLO – ANSWERS TO BASIC QUESTIONS**

**What Cello?**

**What Size?**

**How to hold a cello?**

**How to hold a bow?**

## **Before You Buy A Cello**

By Espie Estrella, About.com Guide

The guidelines of buying a cello is somewhat similar to that of buying a violin. This is because the cello is just like a violin, only bigger. Here are some tips:

## **Always Start With A Budget**

Having a specific budget to start with is essential when planning to buy a musical instrument. Low-priced cellos may be sufficient for those who want to try it out but are not sure if they'll stick with it. Average-priced cellos are for those who are serious in learning to play it, while the high-end models are for those who've been playing for years, performers and professional players.

## **Explore Your Options**

As with any purchase, buying a cello depends on your personal choice. You may want to rent first to get a feel for the instrument before you buy. You may want to buy a used cello, but be very careful when doing this. Or you may buy a new one. Whatever the case may be, browse your local music shops, online stores and newspaper ads to see what brands are within your price range.

## **Bring Along A Pro**

When buying your first music instrument it is always advisable to bring along a pro. If you have a relative or friend who plays the cello or know a cello teacher, bring them along when you shop. Let them test the instrument, listen to their opinions and take their advice into consideration before you buy.

## **What You Should Look For**

Generally, good quality cellos have the following attributes:

- The top is made of spruce.
- The back and sides are made of maple.
- The tuning pegs are made of ebony.
- The endpin is adjustable.
- Proper placement of the soundpost.
- Proper placement of the bridge, not too high or too soft. Also, proper cut of the bridge, the center must not be too thick or too thin.
- The tailpiece may either be made of plastic, metal or wood such as rosewood or ebony.
- Proper cut and placement of the nut.

## **Cello Accessories**

When you buy a new cello, it usually comes with a bow and case. You may also want to buy extra strings, music books or music sheets and a cello stand. Don't forget to buy rosin and an endpin.

# Finding the Right Size of Cello

By Espie Estrella, About.com Guide

There are various sizes of cellos available. Recommendations for finding the right size for you or your child may be based on the following:

## By Your Age:

- 1/8 size - 4 to 6 years old
- 1/4 size - 5 to 7 years old
- 1/2 size - 7 to 11 years old
- 3/4 size - 11 to 15 years old
- 4/4 size - 15 and above

## By Your Height:

- 1/8 to 1/4 size - below 4 feet
- 1/2 size - 4 to 4 1/2 feet
- 3/4 size - 4 1/2 to 5 feet
- 4/4 size - 5 feet and above

## By Body Length:

- 1/8 size - 17.75 to 20 inches
- 1/4 size - 20 to 23 inches
- 1/2 size - 23 to 26 inches
- 3/4 size - 26 to 27.25 inches
- 4/4 size - 30 inches and above
- 

## Additional Sizing Tips:

- Sit up straight on a chair, your feet must be touching the floor.
- Set the endpin of the cello to around 12 inches.
- Now at a 45 degree angle, let the cello rest against your chest.
- The top of the cello must rest at the center of your chest.
- The C string peg must be near your left ear.

# How To Hold A Cello Properly

By Espie Estrella, About.com Guide

The cello has its own special way of playing position. Here are some guidelines to properly hold a cello:

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: 5 minutes

## Here's How:

1. First of all, sit up straight on your chair with your feet on the floor.
2. Place the cello between your knees.
3. The back of the cello should be lightly resting on the center of your chest, the neck of the cello should be about an inch over your shoulder.
4. The peg for the C string should be near your left ear.
5. You can adjust the endpin in relation to your height or the height of your seat so that you'll be comfortable while playing.
6. You can either sit at the edge of your chair or sit way in so that your back is supported. Remember to lengthen your endpin if you're more comfortable playing with your back supported by the chair.
7. Use this photo from [Teacherweb.Com](http://Teacherweb.Com) as a guide. Enjoy playing!



# How To Hold the Cello Bow

By Espie Estrella, About.com Guide

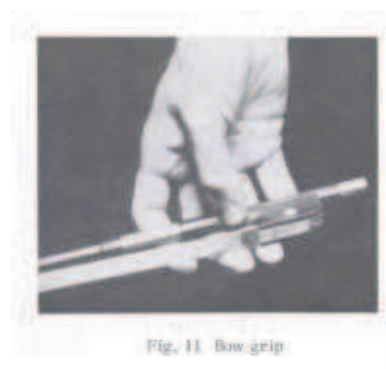
Proper positioning of the bow as well as proper hold is crucial when playing the cello. Here are some tips:

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: Depends on how long you will play. Beginners will be able to learn proper bow hold in minutes.

## Here's How:

1. Familiarize yourself with the parts of the bow. The edge of the bow is called the tip, on the other end is the screw which can be used to loosen or tighten the hair of the bow. That part which is rubbed against the strings is called the bow hair and it is attached to the frog which is the part the player grips when playing the cello.
2. Grip the frog with your right hand.
3. Your grip must be relaxed yet firm as you will be doing a lot of back and forth movement when playing.
4. Keep your grip rounded, imagine you're holding a small ball.
5. Your thumb should rest on the frog or near it.
6. Your other four fingers will naturally fold loosely over the stick.
7. Here are some photos to further guide you.



# Espie Estrella

Espie Estrella is a pianist and songwriter.

## **Experience:**

During the 1990s, Espie held summer piano lessons for children in her community. Her first serious venture into songwriting was in 2001 when one of her songs was included in the "Muzikwerks" album. This was followed by a 2-year project to write 39 songs for a writer/poet. In 2006, Espie hosted her own online radio station called MellowTouch on Live365. Her song, "Living the Dream," is a monthly finalist (Adult Contemporary category) and her co-written song, "Can You Hear Me Lord," is a monthly winner (Christian/Gospel category) in the 2008 Song of the Year contest.

## **Education:**

Espie has a B.A. in Literature and is currently studying to obtain a certificate in music. She is a member of Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI).

## **From Espie Estrella:**

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