

- Practise only when concentrating fully. The only exercises that might benefit with minimum concentration are purely physical, repetitive finger or arm exercises.
- Be aware of **all** the sounds you are making, including noise from breath, feet, open strings ringing, etc.
- Breaks are important, not only for physiological reasons but also to allow the brain (subconsciously) to work further with coordination problems.
- A mirror tells you how you are using your body, and trains the eye for observing other players' technique.
- Breathing should be naturally paced, even when playing difficult passages - practise it if necessary.
- Don't let the neck become stiff when playing. The head should always be free to move in any direction.
- Improvisation, or "phantasy playing", makes one more directly acquainted with the instrument, without involving intellectual or verbal command and evaluation.
- To improve economy and control of all parts of the bow, divide it in two with a chalk mark or tape, and practise exercises (or pieces) in the upper or lower half, alternately.



Fig. 12.1: Series of double stops to be played with various string crossings
(O. Ševčík), Opus 2, Exercise No. 29).

- Many passages can be improved by isolating the bow from the left hand and practising them separately. Remember that the task is not complete until both arm movements are combined again, and the passage **returned to its musical context**.

- Ševčík's Op.2 (originally for violin) is a most useful collection of bow studies. Here one will find suitable exercises for almost any right arm problem. Fig.12 suggests a series of double stops to be used for double bass with Ex. No.29 in Ševčík Op.2 (two string crossing).

- Use a mute to hear more precisely how spiccato or string crossings are working.

- When practising fast passages slowly, let all left hand movements, like changes of position, striking down fingers, etc, be executed rapidly in order to train correct and realistic muscular activity.

- When practising rapid passages, coordination can be improved by putting accents:

- on the first note in every new left hand position
- on the first note of every beat
- on any note that does not speak clearly

- When practising a large interval for intonation, try remembering in advance the sensation in the left arm when the second note was last played successfully. Try also turning the interval upside down and practising it this way round several times.

- One can practise technique without an instrument by repeating, mentally, how certain passages feel when being played slowly.

- Define the goal or reason for every practice period and structure practice accordingly.