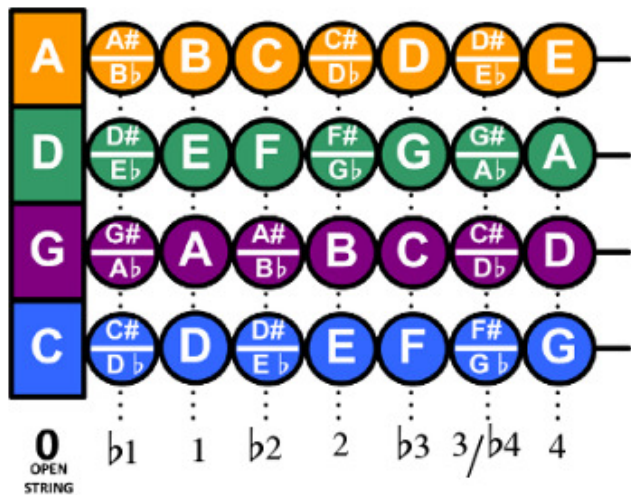


Viola Fingering Chart (first position)



How to use this fingering chart:

First position has two meanings. It refers to both the placement of the left hand at the top of the fingerboard, and also to a specific hand shape (see next pages). This chart shows where all the notes are on the viola in first position, both on the strings and on the staff.

A *half step* is a very short distance away—just a little more than one finger for most people. To go 1 half step from an open string, put your finger barely past the *nut* (the raised wooden bar at the top of the fingerboard). To go 1 half step from another finger, put your next finger almost right next to the finger that's already down.

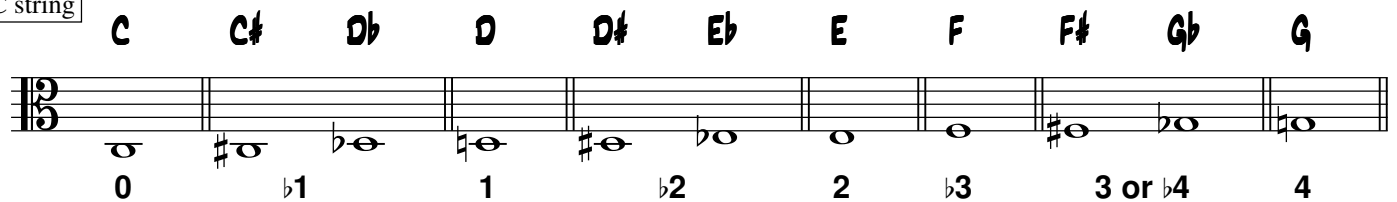
A *whole step* is as long as two half steps. To go 1 whole step from an open string, put your first finger about two fingers' width from the nut. To go 1 whole step from another finger, stretch your next finger away from the finger that's already down.

To find out what a note in your music is and how to finger it, look at what line or space it's on, and then match that to the note on the same line or space in this chart. The name is on top of the note and the fingering is below.

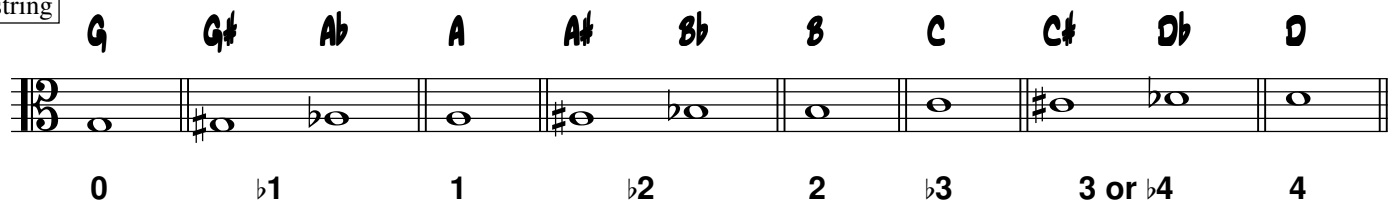
Some notes can be spelled in two different ways. These are called *enharmonics*.

Numbers (like **2**) are whole steps. \flat numbers (like $\flat 2$) are half steps.

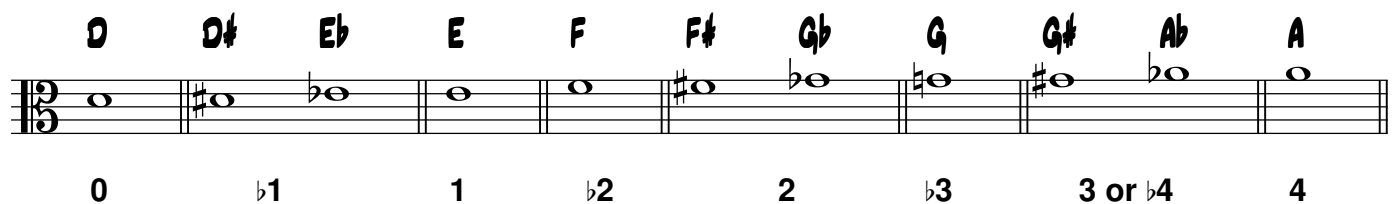
C string



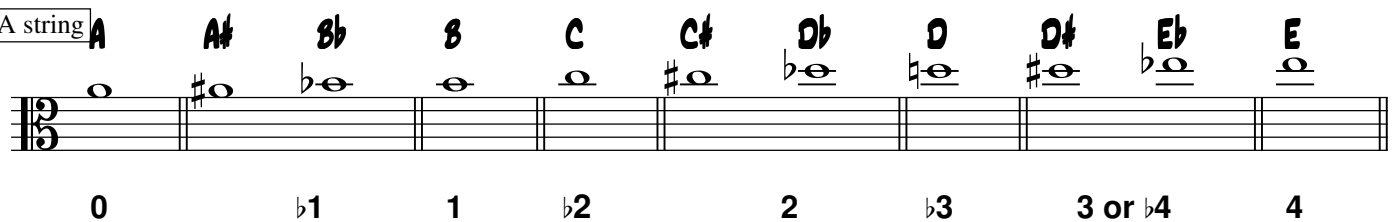
G string



D string



A string



Hand Shapes And Positions

The **key signature** (the sharps or flats at the beginning of the music) usually determines the hand shape-the pattern of whole steps and half steps for the fingers. If you know the key signature and you set your fingers in the right shape, you have a much better chance of playing the right notes. A few common hand shapes are as follows:

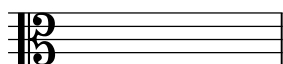
First Position

First position is **Open** {1}**Whole** {2}**Whole** {3}**Half** {4}**Whole**

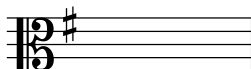
Make sure to start a *whole step* off the open string, and don't forget the *half step* between 2 and 3.

Use *first position* in the following keys:

C Major



G Major



D Major



A Major



The notes in first position on each string are:

C string

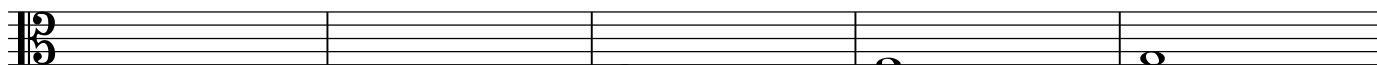
C

D

E

F

G



0

1

2

b3

4

G string

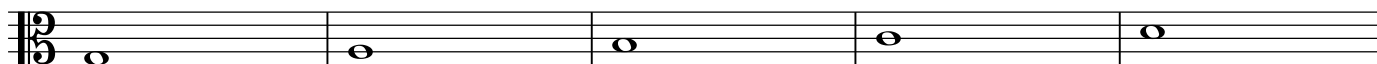
G

A

B

C

D



0

1

2

b3

4

D string

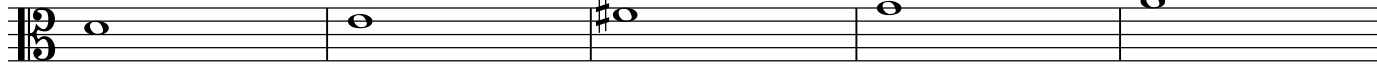
D

E

F#

G

A



0

1

2

b3

4

A string

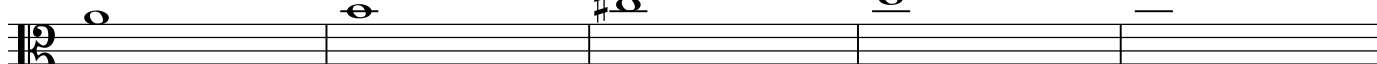
A

B

C#

D

E



0

1

2

b3

4

Half Position

Half position is a half step higher than first position, and uses no open strings.

(1)Half (2)Whole (3)Whole (4)Half

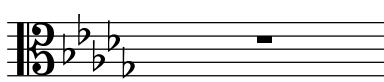
Make sure to start a *whole step* off the open string, and don't forget the *half step* between 2 and 3.

Use *half position* in the following keys:

C# Major / Db Major



Ab Major



Eb Major



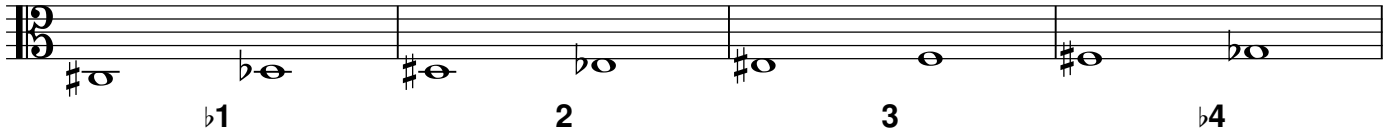
**Bb Major
(high notes)**



The notes in half position on each string are:

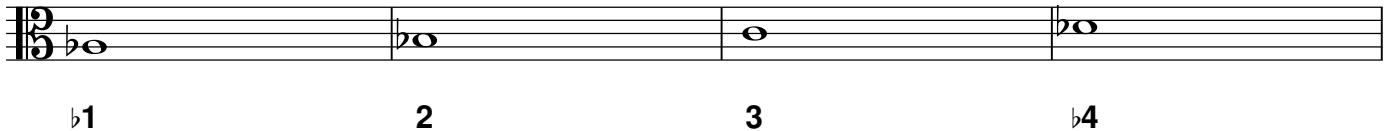
C string

C# Db D# Eb E# F F# Gb



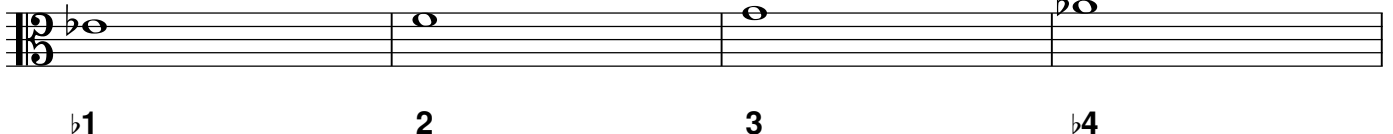
G string

Ab Bb C Db



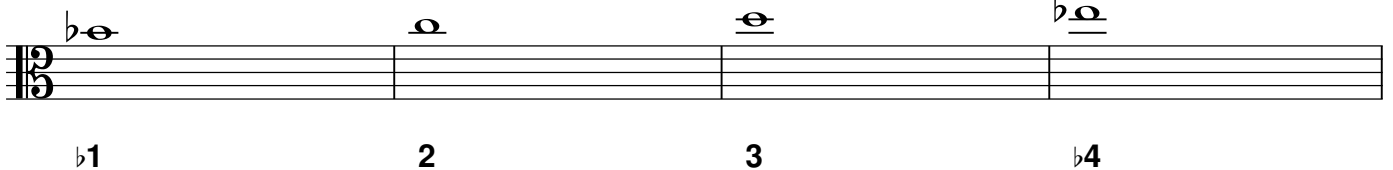
D string

Eb F G Ab



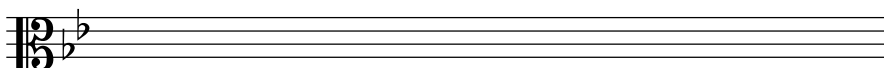
A string

Bb C D Eb



B \flat Major

The key of *B \flat Major* is one of the trickiest keys for string instruments because it requires switching strings AND hand shapes. Unfortunately it is also the most common key for concert band music. The key of B \flat has two flats and looks like this



The hand shape for each string is

C string: {1}**Whole** {2}**Half** {3}**Whole** {4}**Whole**

G string: {1}**Whole** {2}**Half** {3}**Whole** {4}**Whole**

D string: {1}**Half** {2}**Whole** {3}**Whole** {4}**Whole**

A string: {1}**Half** {2}**Whole** {3}**Whole** {4}**Half**

C string

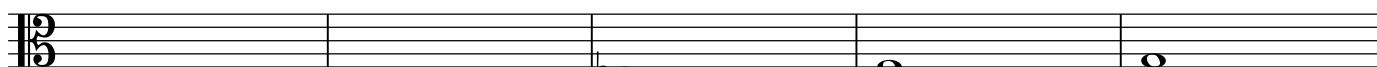
C

D

E \flat

F

G



0

1

\flat 2

3

4

0

1

\flat 2

3

4

G string

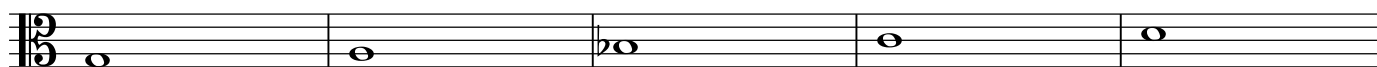
G

A

B \flat

C

D



0

1

\flat 2

3

4

0

1

\flat 2

3

4

D string

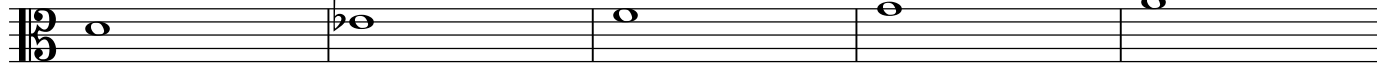
D

E \flat

F

G

A



0

\flat 1

2

3

4

0

\flat 1

2

3

4

A string

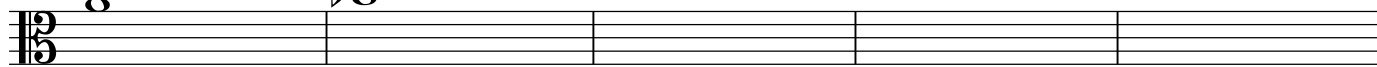
A

B \flat

C

D

E \flat



0

\flat 1

2

3

\flat 4

0

\flat 1

2

3

\flat 4