

Viola Sizing Instructions

How to Choose the Correct Viola Size

To find the viola size that fits you, follow these instructions:

- 1) Extend your left arm out to the side, then move it forward a little bit. Your palm should face up and your elbow should be straight, not bent.
- 2) Using a tape measure or yardstick, measure the distance between the base of the left side of your neck and the middle of your palm. Write down the number.
- 3) On the chart below, find the range that includes your measurement.
- 4) Find the viola size in the chart that matches your measurement.

If you can, try different sizes of viola in a music shop.

- 5) When you are trying violas in a shop, hold the viola against the left side of your neck with your left arm straight, palm up, as described above.
- 6) Wrap your fingers around the scroll. The scroll should fit into your palm, and your fingers should just be able to touch the pegbox.
- 7) If you are unable to touch the pegbox with your fingertips, then you may need the next smaller size viola.
- 8) If your elbow is bent quite a bit with your hand around the scroll, then the instrument is too small, and you should choose a bigger one.

Helpful Tips:

- Violas smaller than 14 inches do not sound good and are difficult to play. Consider learning violin first, then switching to viola when your arm is long enough to fit a bigger one.
- A violin that is too large will be uncomfortable to play, which could discourage you from learning well and allow you to form bad habits.
- If you are in between sizes, it would be better to choose the smaller size.

Find Your Viola Size Using This Chart:

Measurement (inches)	Viola Size	
20-3/4 to 22	12"	
22 to 23-1/2	13"	
23-1/2 to 25-1/2	14"	
25-1/2 to 26-1/4	15"	Full size viola
26-1/4 to 27	15-1/2"	Full size viola
27 to 27-1/2	16"	Full size viola
27-1/2 and over	16-1/2"	Full size viola

A 12" viola uses a 1/2 size violin bow.
A 13" viola uses a 3/4 size violin bow.
All larger viola sizes use a full size viola bow.

A useful video on how to choose the correct size can be viewed at:

<https://www.practicingmusician.com/lessons/viola-picking-out-your-viola-lesson-measuring-arm-length>

