

Problems & Solutions

Problem	Cause	Solution	Exercise
Fingers not over strings	Fingers not curved Collapsing Knuckles Lack of hand strength	Train fingers	Crawling Exercise
2 nd & 3 rd finger too close together in thumb position	Lack of strength	Modified Crawling Exercise	+323 +1232
Tense bow hand / not feeling arm weight	Worried about dropping bow Should and arm coming from above the string	Relax! Drop shoulders	Hang hands from bow
No tone / lack of articulation	Bow not into the string	Use more weight at the beginning of bow stroke (may be lack of rosin but the above solution is much more likely)	‘String Mover’ – dig in with bow and move string without making a sound
Intonation (non-obvious)	String not pressed down, bow too slow, strings are false	Strengthen hand	Crawling Exercise
Back problem	Back rotation?	Sit up or examine how the bass is held or angled	
Bass too high or low		Re-assess method of determining endpin height - left shoulder should not have to lift up for 1 st pos	
Flat fingers	Fingers not curved Lack of strength Student may be playing on pad of finger	Curve fingers	Crawling Exercise
Tense vibrato	Tight muscles Hand holding the bass Skewed aural concept	Relax Assess position Listen to soloists	Oscillate slowly to a metronome “Throw” exercise
No Musicality	All we do is play the bass line	Give bassists the melody	Play music, insist on quality and don’t settle just because they’re bassists
Smeary sound	Changing bows before shift	Change after shift	Slow shifting exercises to zoom in on exactly where the coordination problem is.