

Sometimes repairs are very easy, though necessary. One of the most routine repairs to String instruments are related to the bridge.

First, it is vulnerable to damage, since it stands upright on the surface of the instrument but not attached in any way other than by the tension of the strings.

If the instrument is brushed past a music stand or doorway, the bridge will be the most likely part to become dislodged or broken. However, the most innocent damage happens quite naturally. Since the strings are holding the bridge downward, and since the strings are always stretching out slightly and in need of tuning, that means they are pulled toward the tuning pegs, which in turn drags against the bridge and tends to pull the top of the bridge forward.

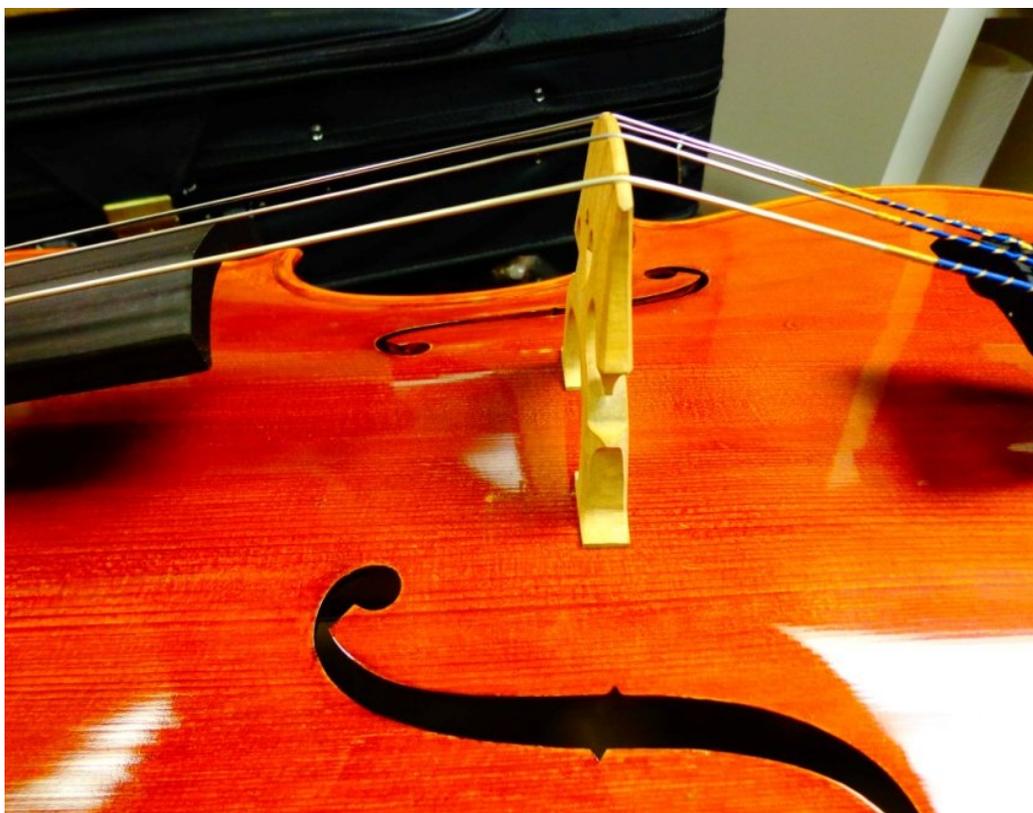
If not corrected, the bridge will topple and snap out from under the strings. Sometimes that force will actually snap the bridge in half! So it is always a good idea to pinch the bridge slightly back towards the tailpiece to keep it perpendicular with the surface of the instrument.

In this example, at some point the bridge must have become entirely dislodged and was placed back in place on the instrument and the strings retightened. But there is a problem...



The bridge should be positioned in line with the notches on the 'f' hole. This bridge is at least 1" too close to the fingerboard. Not only will that raise the strings higher in relation to the fingerboard surface, but there will be very little bowing space between the bridge and the end of the fingerboard.

Something not seen is the position of the soundpost that is inside the instrument. The typical position for that is just slightly below (toward the tailpiece) the foot of the bridge. This bridge is sitting almost 2" in front of the soundpost, so the transmission of sound from the bridge to the surface of the instrument and through to the back is hampered.



The correct placement is now established, and the strings retightened. Note that the backside (closest to tailpiece) is perpendicular to the surface of the instrument. The front of the bridge usually has a slight curvature, while the back is usually flat, so that is the side that is measured.

This minor adjustment will make a significant improvement in the playing and sound of this instrument.