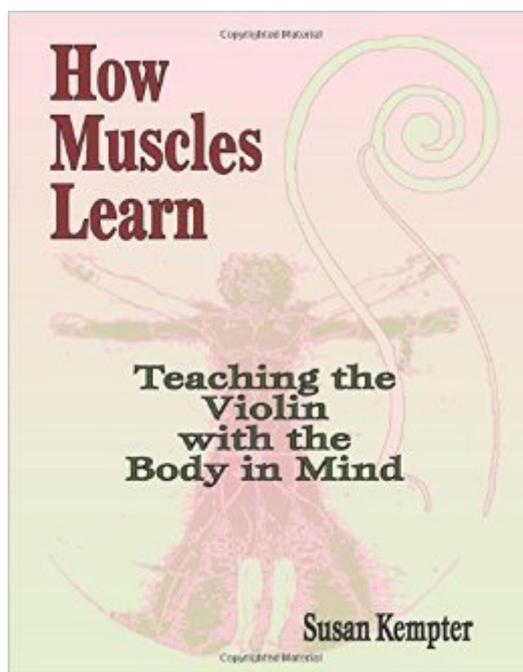


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# How Muscles Learn: Teaching The Violin With The Body In Mind



## Synopsis

How Muscles Learn provides information useful in helping teachers find productive techniques in teaching based on how muscles learn movement patterns. Muscles and bodies can and should be thoroughly trained before concentrating exclusively on musical outcomes. Contents include: the importance of good posture, range of motion and movement, muscles have memory: how movement patterns are acquired, and proactive interference: its issues and effects. Each chapter includes helpful photographs illustrating techniques, helpful hints, exercises to practice the principles in each section, and musical examples.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

First off, a typo in the description. The book is actually 97 pages rather than 48. Although written primarily for teachers of children, I found 'How Muscles Learn' very helpful for my self-study. The explanations and photos of posture and playing position are clear and easy to translate into adult terms. As the author says, it's as much about teaching the body as it is about teaching the music. Susan Kempter's premise is that physiology and kinesiology have much to offer violin players and teachers. Violin pedagogy, along with that of the piano, has a lengthy history with different schools of technique dominating during various eras. Certain ideas, such as the alignment of the elbow beneath the instrument and the position of the bowing arm to the body, continue to be handed down too often without the benefit of recent advances in body science. That said, the book is very hands-on and jargon-free. Children are very physical learners and the emphasis here is on

practical doing rather than scientific explanation. There are a number of excerpts of pieces from the Suzuki books. I happened to have them but, if you don't, it's not difficult to find or arrange similar pieces that illustrate the same technical problems. I happen to enjoy working out the playing mechanics of different instruments at my own pace, making my way (however labyrinth-like) towards some basic technique. I'm neither a teacher nor a professional; I play with friends for my own enjoyment. I'd recommend the book to other self-learners with a similar exploratory bent who enjoy working things out for themselves.

The author approaches the subject with unique knowledge of how muscles learn. She applies this to the WHY and HOW of playing a violin in ways that make great sense. I've read the book twice and heard her speak twice. I'd like to know more! It is a great resource to me in teaching beginning string players in public school.

The book is a little lightweight. I finished it in less than 2 hrs. Basically, it is scientifically explained, all the stuff your child's violin teacher told you about. Now that you know the reasons, you would probably be a little more vigilant when guiding your child. I recommend this book to all parents of young children learning the violin.

This book incorporates neuropsychologic principles and applies them to violin pedagogy. Would love to see this as required reading for all string teachers.

This book is one of the best efforts to put the science of technique into language that anyone can quickly understand. The information directly about playing the violin has been helpful in my own playing but also in putting the concepts into words for my students. The weakness of the book is the lack of proofing, editing, and scholarly finish. Perhaps a second edition with more information, updates, corrected references, citations, etc. may be in the works. I would welcome it. As an instrumental teacher who did not train as a violinist and with very little college strings instruction, sifting through this book has been enjoyable and rewarding.

Interesting notions about how, when and how long to practice.

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