

Level: Primer

Posture, pressure,
practice, position, finger
numbers, warm-ups,
keyboard, black keys.

Lesson One

The Five P's

Posture – Sit tall, feet flat on the floor, lean *slightly* forward, relax shoulders.

Pressure – Press into the key with rounded fingers, barely touching the fingernail.

Preparation – Always do warm-ups and exercises to get fingers ready.

Practice – Play each piece several times in a row. I recommend playing a piece at least three times before moving on to the next one.

Perfection – Don't settle for 'okay' and don't rush through these lessons. Let yourself be as perfect as possible. Take pride in your progress.

Remember and use the five P's for best practicing.

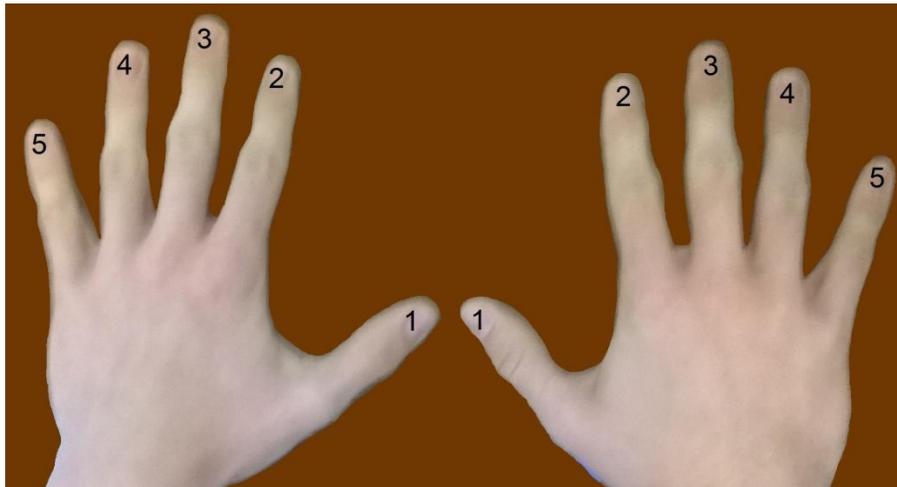
1. Sit up straight, facing the center of the piano. Your outstretched fists should touch the back of the keys. Now relax your arms so your elbows hang naturally at your sides, your forearms are horizontal, and your curved fingers are on the front of the white keys. Your feet should be flat on the floor, with the right foot a little in front of the left.



2. Keep your fingers round, as if you are holding a tennis ball. *Always* keep your thumbs on the keys. Do not rest your wrists in front of the keys, but keep a straight line from your elbow to the middle of your hand.



3. Your fingers have numbers.



Place your hands, with rounded fingers, on a flat surface. Now lift only the 1's (thumbs) then set them back down. Continue with the 2's, 3's, 4's, and 5's. Now mix up the numbers and see if you can lift the correct fingers.



Warm-ups

1. **Push-downs** — With first knuckle vertical and finger rounded, press second finger down on the front of the keyboard. Keep wrist well below finger, and do 10 presses. Continue with other fingers. This helps build fingers strength and roundness. This is not a necessary exercise for the thumbs.



2. **Splits** — With one finger pointing outward and all other fingers pointing inward, press against the piano's vertical surface, do the 'splits' with each finger. Hold for the count of five. This helps build finger independence and strength. This is not a necessary exercise for the thumbs.



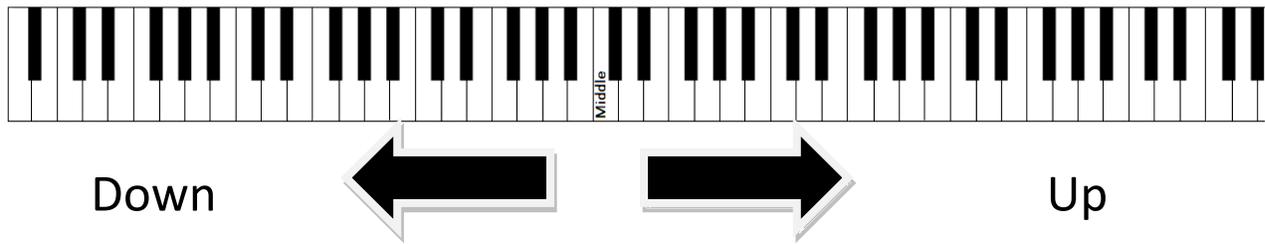
3. **'Walking' on the keys** — With rounded fingers, place the hand on the keys, one finger on each consecutive key. 'Walk' along the keys, beginning with the 1 (thumb) and continuing through to finger 5, then walking back to 1. Let each finger sink into the key, keeping the finger round and lifting all other fingers slightly. Walk slowly and carefully. Work to have a nice, smooth sound going from key to key. **Remember** not to bounce the wrist, and keep the fingers round.



4. **Finger lifts** — Place rounded fingers on a flat surface. Lift and drop index finger while keeping all others down. Continue with each finger lifting and dropping individually.



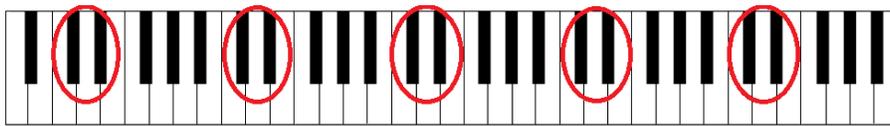
The Keyboard



Beginning at the middle of the keyboard, play the keys to the left with your left finger 2. The further you go, the *lower* the sound gets. This is going *down* the keys.

Beginning at the middle of the keyboard, play the keys to the right with your right finger 2. The further you go, the *higher* the sound gets. This is going *up* the keys.

The keyboard is made up of black and white keys. The black keys are grouped in set of two's and three's.



With the left hand fingers 2 and 3, play all the sets of two black keys low on the keyboard. (Keep fingers rounded.)

With the right hand fingers 2 and 3, play all the sets of two black keys high on the keyboard.



With the left hand fingers 2, 3 and 4, play all the sets of three black keys low on the keyboard.

With the right hand fingers 2, 3 and 4, play all the sets of three black keys high on the keyboard.