

Helpful Tips for Learning Piano

Learning Good Practicing Habits

Learning good practicing habits is essential to your success. Students who learn good practicing habits will understand that overcoming obstacles is a part of learning. They will make progress, enjoy the rewards of playing well, and use their practicing skills toward success in other disciplines. Students who haven't learned that overcoming obstacles is essential for progress often get too frustrated and have a tendency to give up.

Getting Organized

Organize your notebook, practice log and any loose music into a binder, and keep all of your music books together by the piano.

Getting the Most out of Practice Time

General Practice Guidelines

- Do as much of your practicing as possible at home. The majority of your lesson time should be spent learning new material and working on technique.
- Beginning students should practice at least half an hour five times a week. Advanced students should practice from 45 minutes to two hours each practice session. Consistent practice is more effective than a few long sessions a week.
- Set aside a time for practicing, and practice at this time each session.
- Use a practice log to keep track of your progress, and bring it to your lesson every week along with your notebook.
- Play slowly until you can play each phrase evenly and on time.

Example Practice Session

- 1) Mark your practice start time in your logbook. Log in each exercise and piece as you finish working on it.
- 2) Play exercises first, paying attention to posture and technique.
- 3) Play your pieces. Work first on any notes or passages that I circled. Second, work on difficult phrases.

- 4) Play one phrase at a time. Count, and make sure each phrase is fluid and on time. As you work, listen and enjoy the sound of each phrase. Bring out the character of each phrase. If you make a mistake, go back to the beginning of the phrase. Then play it five times correctly. Otherwise, you will learn the phrase incorrectly.
- 5) After each phrase is smooth, put phrases together into larger sections and smooth out each of these sections.
- 6) Play through the whole piece several times.
- 7) Practice music flash cards and/or do theory exercises. A thorough knowledge of notes and intervals will make learning piano a lot easier and more fun.
- 8) Mark your ending time in your logbook.

How Mom and Dad Can Help

Your child will need your support and encouragement in the beginning. It takes time and discipline to learn good practicing habits. She will need you to answer questions and make sure she is practicing effectively throughout the week. During the last five minutes of your child's lesson, we can discuss the lesson plan and address any questions you might have.

You can also help by playing music around the house as much as possible. Any music is wonderful! Music that we're going to play in the studio is very helpful. The more exposure your child has to music, the more likely he will be enthusiastic about learning to play it.