

Lesson 3 - Sitting at the Piano, Fingering, and Rhythm

Overview:

The previous lesson introduced all the notes of the musical alphabet. In this lesson, you will learn to sit correctly and use all five fingers when playing. Additionally, rhythm will be introduced and practiced with clapping exercises.

Piano Playing Posture

Elements of correct posture:



- Sit straight
- Arms relaxed with shoulders down
- Hands and fingers curved
- Wrist at the same height as the back of the hand
- Elbows at or slightly above the keyboard

Incorrect/bad posture:



- Slouching
- Shoulders raised and tense
- Elbows lower than the keyboard
- Wrists lower than the keyboard
- Hands and fingers flat

Hand Position



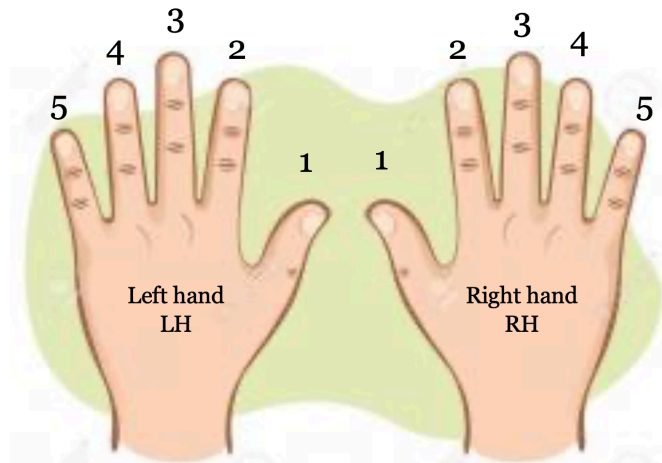
Elements of correct hand positioning:

- Curved hand shape (imagine holding a tennis ball or orange)
- Curved finger tips. Long fingernails make it difficult to play with the correct hand position, so long nails should be trimmed.
- All fingers relaxed and resting on the keys. Fingers that fly up into the air as you play are caused by tense hands.

Watch the following instructional video on sitting and hand posture.

Note: insert instruction video "1.3 posture" here

Finger Numbers



Go through the following finger number exercises for practice. Watch for correct sitting and hand posture as you practice. Be able to play each exercise evenly and smoothly.

Finger Number Exercises

Start with your right hand. Place your right hand finger 1 (thumb) on middle C.

1. 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1
2. 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5
3. 5 4 5 4 3 2 3 2 1 1 1
4. 1 2 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3
5. 1 3 1 3 2 4 2 4 5 4 3 2 1
6. 5 3 4 2 3 1 1
7. 1 5 1 5 4 3 2 1
8. 1 3 3 2 2 4 4 3 3 5 4 3 3 2 1

Now switch hands. Place left hand finger 1 (thumb) on middle C.

Rhythm Notation

Music is essentially a series of pitches and rhythm. Without correct rhythm, the same bunch of pitches can sound wrong. Change the rhythm, and you could even change the piece entirely!

Every note has a certain length. A note can be one beat, two beats, three beats, half a beat, a quarter of a beat...you get the idea! *What is a beat?* It is a steady count, which can be fast, medium, slow, and anything in-between.

In this lesson, we will learn the four basic rhythmic notations:

Quarter note

1 beat



Clap



Count

1 1 1 1

Half note

2 beats



Clap



Count

1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

Dotted-half note

3 beats



Clap



Count

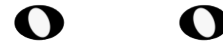
1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Whole note

4 beats



Clap



Count

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Watch the instructional video to learn how to clap and count these different rhythms.

Note: insert instructional video “1.3 rhythm” here