



To the Student

Musical Fingers 3 is the third in a series of four books designed to help you develop the physical skills to play the piano. We call these books *musical fingers* because each exercise has musical as well as technical goals.

As you learned in Books 1 and 2, *technic* is a study of the way to produce the sounds you want to make at the piano. It includes developing skills in three areas:

- the ability to create in your imagination the *sound* you want to make;
- an awareness of the way your hands and body *look* to make that sound;
- an awareness of how your hands and body *feel* to make that sound.

Readiness to Play

To be ready to play, your body must be in an active and balanced state, free to move quickly and gracefully to any position on the keyboard. To insure physical readiness, there are several important checkpoints:

1. Height of the bench

Be sure the bench is the proper height for you, so that your upper arms hang loosely from your shoulders, and your forearms and wrists are level with the floor.

2. Distance from the keyboard

Be sure the bench is the proper distance from the keyboard, so that your elbows are free and at a comfortable distance from your body.

3. Posture

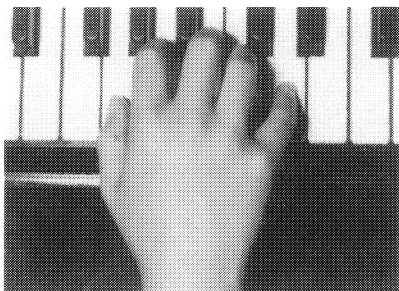
Sit tall, with your back straight, leaning very slightly toward the keyboard, and be sure that your shoulders are dropped and relaxed.

4. Balance of weight

Divide your weight between "seat and feet." Part of your weight should be on the bench and part on your left foot. This division of weight helps you feel comfortably balanced and free to play over the entire keyboard without moving up or down on the bench.

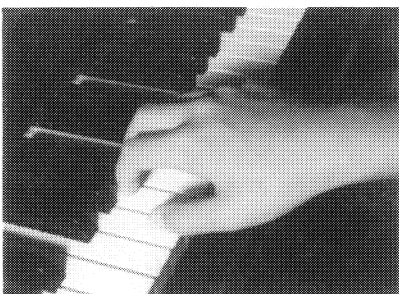
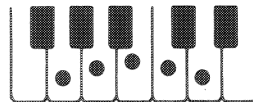
Hand Position

The pictures and comments which follow will remind you of what you learned about a good hand position in Books 1 and 2.



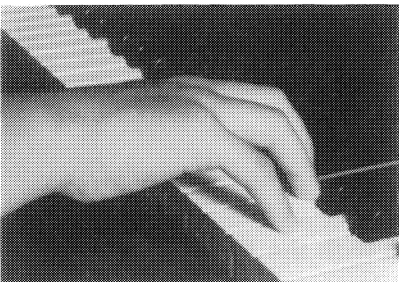
Picture 1 shows the right hand as it looks from above:

- the knuckles of the four fingers are visible
- the thumb is loose and curved slightly toward the 2nd finger
- the fingertips form a curved shape on the keyboard, like this:



Picture 2 shows the right hand as it looks from the thumb's side:

- the arch is high and level, not sloping toward the fifth finger
- the thumb is close to the 2nd finger and curving slightly toward it



Picture 3 shows the right hand as it looks from the 5th finger's side:

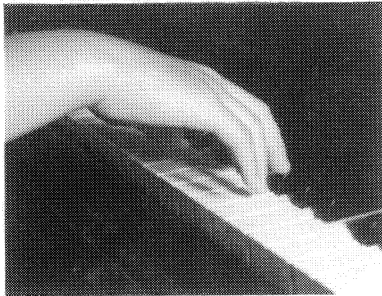
- the arch is high and level
- the 5th finger is standing tall with a firm tip

Keyboard Topography

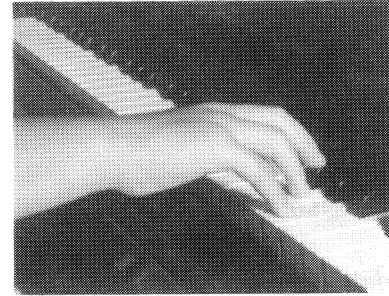
Physical readiness to play also involves careful consideration of keyboard topography—the study of how your hands and fingers adjust to accommodate the configurations of white and black keys in various positions. When a position includes black keys, prepare your hand over the black keys *first*, then allow your hand to settle comfortably onto the white keys. Preparing the black keys first avoids the excess motion or tension caused by “reaching” for the black keys.

Preparing the Keyboard Topography of D Major

Preparing the black key first:



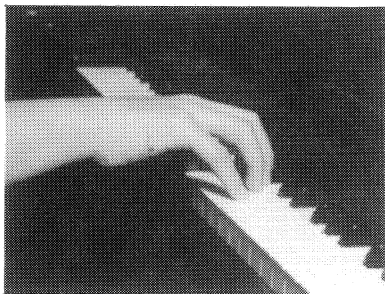
Settling into position:



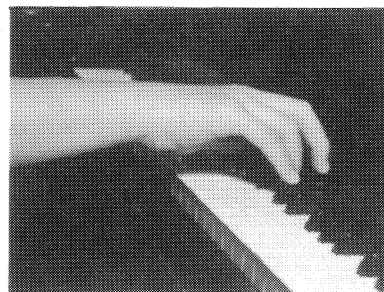
Comparing the Keyboard Topography of G Major with G^b Major

Notice the dramatic difference between the keys of G Major and G^b Major. In G^b, the hand is higher because the black keys are higher and it is farther forward because the black keys are shorter.

Right Hand in G Major
(1 and 5 on whites)

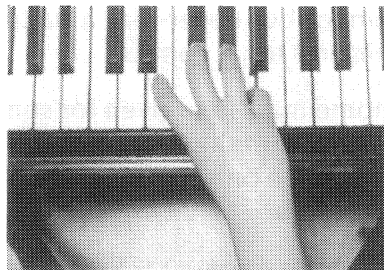


Right Hand in G^b Major
(1 and 5 on blacks)



Preparing the Topography of an A Major Scale Crossing

In this picture, the right hand is playing a descending A Major scale. The thumb has played and fingers 4-3-2 are prepared as a unit over G[#]-F[#]-E.



Impulse Practice

Impulse practice means playing a musical gesture with one uninterrupted motion of the arm. The notes within the gesture are carried out by the fingers. Begin with enough energy to carry you through the gesture on a single impulse.

Play-Prepare

Play-prepare is a term we use to describe the most efficient and musical way to move from one position to another. It means that the energy used to play a given gesture also prepares the hand for what comes next. Whenever play-prepare is to be used, an asterisk (*) shows you exactly when to be prepared for the next position.

How to Use This Book

Abbreviations

Throughout this book, RH means right hand, LH means left hand and HT means hands together.

Memorizing

As in Books 1 and 2, the exercises in this book are patterns that are easy to remember. We recommend that you memorize the patterns at once so that instead of reading them, your eyes can focus on your hands and you can concentrate fully on how they *look* and *feel* to make the desired sounds.

Most of the patterns are to be played many times—by repeating them; by playing them in different octaves; by playing them on each consecutive key within an octave; or by transposing them to many different keys.

Dynamics

Signs for loud and soft are given only when the exercise calls for two contrasting dynamic levels simultaneously. Elsewhere, your teacher will assign the dynamic level appropriate for specific patterns in any given lesson.

Tempo

At first, practice the patterns so slowly that you can concentrate on the desired *sound, look* and *feel*. When a pattern is secure at a slow tempo, gradually increase your tempo, but never play a pattern faster than you can play it with complete rhythmic and tonal control.

Metronome marks are given for some of the patterns, but we do *not* recommend that you practice with the metronome. Instead we suggest that you and your teacher use the metronome only to determine what we mean by slow tempo or fast tempo for any given exercise.

Rhythm

A strong rhythmic pulse and flow is essential to all technical practice. Before beginning to practice any pattern, feel the pulse so strongly that it will maintain itself to the end of the exercise.

Daily Practice

In developing any physical skill, practice must be regular. Piano practice is no exception. Daily practice is essential to developing the technic necessary for the music you want to play. As your technic becomes more comfortable, efficient and musical, playing the piano will be more and more rewarding.

Frances Clark, Louise Goss and Sam Holland

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1 Five-Finger Positions

A. Developing Facility in Sixteenth Notes

1. *Contrary Motion*

As you play pattern 1:

In measures 1-2, emphasize the tones played by fingers 5, 4, 3, 2.
Play your thumb with a gentle, weightless feeling.

In measures 4-5, emphasize the tones played by fingers 1, 2, 3, 4.
Play your 5th finger with a gentle, weightless feeling.

SOUND & FEEL In measure 4, did you hear and feel the emphasis change from fingers 5, 4, 3, 2 to fingers 1, 2, 3, 4?

Play pattern 1 again, this time in *E minor*.

2. *Parallel Motion*

Patterns 2a-b use the same notes as pattern 1, but in *parallel* motion.

As you play them:

Emphasize the tones played by fingers 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1, 2, 3, 4.

Play your thumb or 5th finger with a gentle, weightless feeling.

4 Consecutive Double Notes

A. Thirds

1. Legato Thirds in a Five-Finger Position

Play pattern 23 until it flows easily (♩ = M.M. 60):

RH alone

LH alone (1 octave lower)

23

SOUND Within each slur were the two voices legato?

Transpose pattern 23 to each of these keys:

F MAJOR F MINOR E MAJOR E MINOR

2. Legato Thirds in Extended Positions

Patterns 24a-d provide experience in playing legato thirds between fingers $\frac{3}{1}$ and $\frac{2}{1}$.
Play each pattern, beginning on every white key within one octave.

RH alone descending

24a

RH alone ascending

24b

LH alone ascending

24c

LH alone descending

24d

SOUND Were the two voices legato throughout, especially between fingers $\frac{3}{1}$ and $\frac{2}{1}$?

3. Staccato Thirds in Extended Positions

Play patterns 25a-f up and down in 3 different octaves.

For RH alone

25a

25b

25c

For LH alone

25d

25e

25f

Transpose patterns 25a-f to the keys of F MAJOR and C MAJOR.