

LEARN KEYS BY BEN

Beginner's Handbook



GETTING STARTED WITH
LEARNING TO PLAY PIANO



*no music
no life*

GETTING STARTED

This is a handbook that is designed to help you in the process of starting to learn to play the piano. Now in taking this on there are some things that you may have questions about, and there are probably some things that you haven't even thought about. Let's start with some of the common questions that we hear from beginners.

What Do I Need To Get Started?

If you've had some lessons before, then you may know some of the answers to these very basic questions, but it never hurts to review them anyway.

What Equipment Do I Need?

With learnkeysbyben.com, all you will need is a tablet, laptop, cell phone or desktop, and WIFI access. Everything else is supplied on the site, so you won't need to purchase special software or hardware.

There is no particular iPad or tablet that works best, iOS or Android both work very well with learnkeysbyben.com.

If you have a desktop or laptop, those can work great, however you will need to have them on your keyboard or very near to be able to see them when taking your lesson or practicing.



What Kind Of Instrument Do I Need?

There are several types of keyboards and pianos available. There are many to choose from at all price levels. Here are some recommendations for you when you are choosing:

Full Sized Keyboard

It's important as you are learning to become familiar with things like finger position and placement. In order to get these elements right we suggest that you not buy a keyboard with smaller keys.



**A full size keyboard
on a piano is
88 keys**

The full size keyboard on a piano is 88 keys, 52 white keys and 36 black keys. Lower-end synthesizers may have as few as 25 keys, although most home-use keyboards come with 49, 61, or 76 keys.

We would recommend getting at least a 61 note keyboard, as this will give you enough keys to play most exercises and songs on.

We recommend :
CASIO

The 76 or 88 note piano or keyboard is even better if you have room for it.

WEIGHTED VS NON-WEIGHTED VS **SEMI-WEIGHTED**

On a mechanical piano, you are literally pushing down on the keys and through some leverage have a felt hammer strike a string, which creates the sound. On digital pianos, there are no levers and hammers, the sound is created through completing a circuit with a switch. There is no push back from the keys. In order to create a feel of a mechanical piano some digital keyboards have weighted keys, some are semi-weighted, and others are non-weighted.

This is really a personal choice type of thing on which one you like to play. Once you get more experienced you may find that you just like one over the other, and that you can express more emotion and nuance with weighted or semi-weighted keys. When you are a beginner, timing and position are more important than feel, so whichever your taste and budget allows should be the guiding force here.

A Sustain Or Hold Pedal Is A Must!

Some of the less expensive keyboards do not have what is known as a sustain or hold pedal. This pedal allows you to have the sound continue after you have lifted your fingers off the keys. This is an essential feature for many songs and playing styles, so make sure your keyboard has one.

Touch Or Velocity Sensitivity Is Also A Must!

Some of the less expensive keyboards do not have what is known as touch or velocity sensitivity. This is necessary to allow the keyboard to respond to how hard or softly you strike a key. Look for a keyboard that has this feature, because you will quickly get to the stage of needing this in your playing.

Portable vs. Stationary

One of the most important things to have is ready access. Whether or not you have a portable keyboard or a stationary piano, you need to make sure it is available for regular practice and playing. It can be very nice to have a portable keyboard, as they can be brought somewhere other than where you normally play, in order to play for a special event or with others. Also, they tend to take up less space.

The quality of sound has come a long way on portable keyboards, they generally cost less than a traditional piano, and they don't need to be tuned regularly. Again, this comes down to what you need and want.

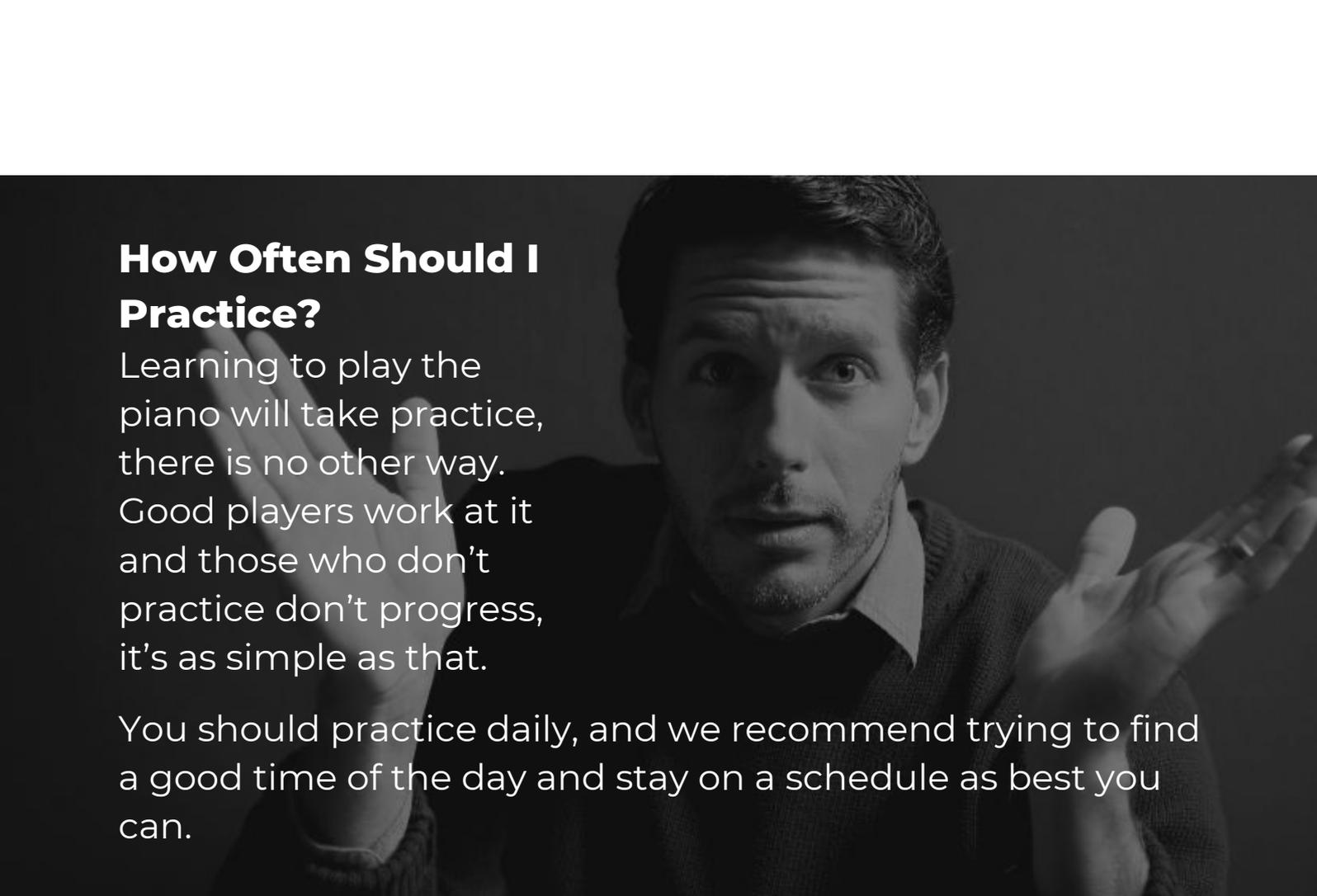
Does It Matter What I Sit On?

The sitting position is important! We recommend that what you sit on is adjustable for height, because the height of the bench, the angle of your arms and the positions of your hands matter. Official piano sitting benches that are padded and adjustable are the best choice. You can find these on Amazon or other fine music retailers.

Where Do I Place My Keyboard In The House?

Where you place your piano or keyboard is important. You have to think of this in terms of creating the “right” environment, so you should take into consideration both the sound you create and the external sounds around you. Try to avoid rooms with a lot of echo or background noise. You can actually play anywhere, but it's best to set aside a place for your piano or keyboard so that it is in a place where you can concentrate and not be interrupted while practicing or playing.

Lighting is important, since you will most likely be reading music you will want to have a well-lit room or a room that has good lighting sources. Your eyes will thank you.



How Often Should I Practice?

Learning to play the piano will take practice, there is no other way. Good players work at it and those who don't practice don't progress, it's as simple as that.

You should practice daily, and we recommend trying to find a good time of the day and stay on a schedule as best you can.

Build A Daily Habit

And we recommend trying to find a good time of the day and stay on a schedule as best you can. We would recommend short sessions of maybe 15 minutes each and then as you progress in your learning, build into longer sessions. Keep in mind that if you find yourself with only a few minutes to practice it is well worth it, and is actually more beneficial to practice 3 separate 15 minute sessions as opposed to one 45 minute session. Once you have become proficient you can practice as you want, but at first, building good habits and practicing often will speed up your results.

Start with your scales every day. To begin, pick two or three and play them several times each, rotating them so you become equally proficient at each of them. This is to become your minimum practice event on a daily basis.

Then add songs and other exercises to your daily practice. Try and pick a specific song or group of songs and practice them until you can play them well, then move on to another group, always going back and playing songs that you have learned to brush up on and also to see how much you have progressed.

In Summary

We hope this handbook serves as a good source of information to you as you begin your journey of learning to play piano. We invite you to register on learnkeysbyben.com. You get all this for programs starting as low as \$8 a month. All your lessons have a video instruction with accompanying sheet music. Some sessions provide an audio clip for practicing as well. There are also Podcasts to help with the different areas of study, with more being added regularly.

Thanks for downloading our handbook and hopefully we will see you soon on learnkeysbyben.com.

If you have any questions you can reach us at support@learnkeysbyben.com. We will do our best to answer you back in 24 hours.

Have Fun,

Ben Camp