

Preliminary Exercises

BE KIND TO YOUR HANDS!

No part of the body takes more abuse than the hands. We wear shoes on our feet to protect them against the rough surfaces they walk on. Our hands are almost constantly exposed to the elements and to the rough things we do to them. Gloves are usually worn only to keep the hands warm in cold weather.

If you want to keep your hands in playing condition, it is best to wear gloves when you are lifting large, heavy objects, as well as when you are working with rough tools, screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches, pruning shears, spades, and even vacuum cleaners.

USE A LITTLE WARM WATER

Before practicing, it is good to soak the hands for a few minutes in warm water. This promotes circulation. Many concert pianists use very warm water on their hands before beginning to play. Towel the hands vigorously until they are dry, then hold your arms out with the hands dangling from the wrist, and shake out your hands rapidly for a few moments.

DANGLE FROM
WRISTS

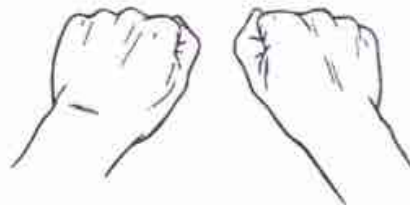


SHAKE OUT
HANDS

No. 1

- a) Holding your arms in playing position, palms downward, clench both hands tightly, making two fists. Hold while you count "ONE-TWO."

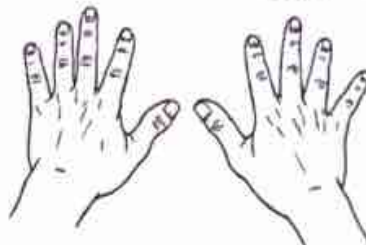
MAKE TIGHT
FISTS



PALMS
DOWN

- b) SNAP the fingers quickly outward, opening both hands. Do this with great vigor. Hold this position with all fingers extended. Count "THREE-FOUR."

SNAP
FINGERS OPEN



PALMS
DOWN

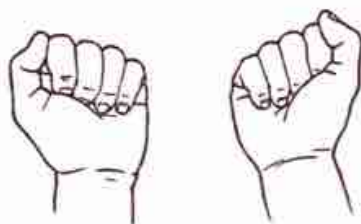
- c) Shake out both hands, dangling from the wrists. Count "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR."



No. 2

- a) Repeat the beginning of the previous exercise, with **PALMS UPWARD**. Clench both hands, making two fists. Hold and count "ONE-TWO."

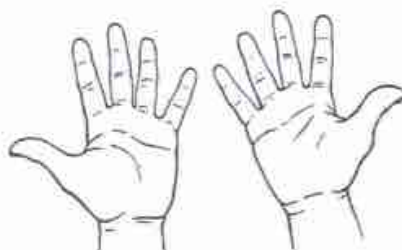
MAKE TIGHT
FISTS



PALMS
UP

- b) SNAP the fingers outward (palms up), opening both hands. Hold fingers outward as you count "THREE-FOUR."

SNAP
FINGERS OPEN



PALMS
UP

- c) Turn hands over, palms down, hands dangling from the wrists, and shake out. Count "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR."

**No. 3 Combining DEEP-BREATHING with Preliminary Exercise No. 1**

Seated at the piano, repeat step a) of Preliminary Exercise No. 1, clenching the fists with palms downward, while breathing IN (the lower abdomen moves outward). Mentally count "ONE-TWO."

Repeat step b), snapping the fingers outward, expelling the air while mentally counting "THREE-FOUR."

Repeat step c), shaking out your hands as you inhale, mentally counting "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR." Continue as you exhale, counting "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR."

To avoid possible dizziness due to hyperventilation, this exercise should not be repeated more than two or three times at first.

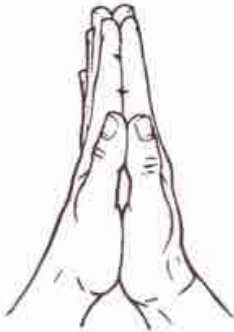
No. 4 Combining DEEP-BREATHING with Preliminary Exercise No. 2

Follow the procedure described just above, clenching the hands and snapping the fingers outward with **PALMS UP**. Turn hands over to shake out from the wrists.

Isometric Exercise

An isometric exercise is one in which one set of muscles is briefly tensed in opposition to another set of muscles, or in opposition to a solid surface.

To prepare for this exercise, press the hands flatly together with all fingers touching, in a "prayer position."



Now slowly bring the palms apart, with fingertips touching, until all fingers are in a curved position.



EXERCISE: Keep fingers in the curved position, relaxed.

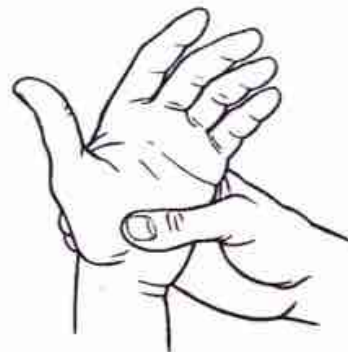
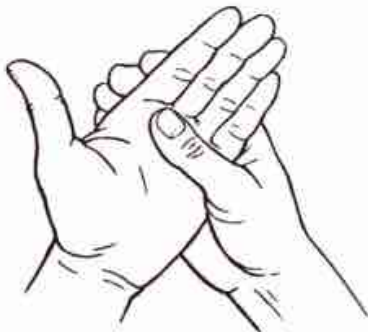
Now press the 3rd fingers firmly together. Keep the other fingers relaxed. Do this four times, COUNTING "ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR."

Do the same with the 2nd fingers, then the 4th fingers, then the thumbs, and finally with the 5th fingers.

Repeat several times, then shake out your hands vigorously. Repeat again.

A Beneficial Hand Massage

1. Place the back of the left hand in the palm of the right hand, relaxed and flat.
2. With the thumb of the right hand, massage the left hand along the ridge of the fingers and along the fleshy part of the base of the thumb. Do not use excessive pressure, or you may bruise the hand. Continue this for about 30 seconds.



3. Reverse hands, massaging the right hand with the left.
4. Shake out the hands vigorously for several seconds.

This exercise should be beneficial to circulation and should make the hands more flexible.

Four Good Reasons for Playing with Curved Fingers

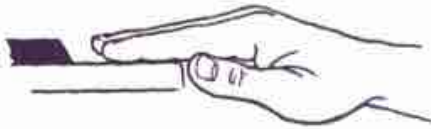
1. When the fingers are straight, each finger has a different length.



When the fingers are curved, each finger has, in effect, the same length.



2. If your fingers are straight, the thumb cannot be properly used.



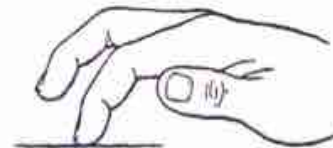
Curved fingers bring the thumb into the correct playing position.



3. Straight fingers will bend at the first joint, opposite to the motion of the key, delaying key response.



With curved fingers, keys respond instantly. You are IN CONTROL when you CURVE!



4. Moving over the keys will require turning the thumb *under* the fingers and crossing fingers *over* the thumb. Curved fingers provide an "ARCH" that makes this motion possible.



VERY IMPORTANT! Keep fingernails reasonably SHORT. It is impossible to curve fingers properly with long fingernails.

Five-Finger "Aerobics"

These workouts are played in **CONTRARY MOTION**. That is, the notes of the RH move **UP** as the notes of the LH move **DOWN**, and vice-versa. The hands play identical fingering at all times.

Play the first 8 measures of each of these workouts three times:

1. Moderately loud, keeping fingers close to the keys.
 2. A little louder, lifting each finger about one inch above each key before you play it.
 3. Much louder, lifting each finger as high as possible before playing.
- End the third time with the whole note in the last measure.

Play **SLOWLY**, with **HANDS TOGETHER**. Keep fingers **CURVED** at all times!

IMPORTANT! It is relaxing and helpful to take several deep breaths, exhaling slowly, before beginning any exercise. Breathe naturally as you play.

No. 1

Musical notation for exercise No. 1, measures 1-8. The exercise is in 4/4 time. The right hand (RH) moves up and the left hand (LH) moves down in contrary motion. Fingering is indicated above and below notes.

No. 2

This exercise is a challenge for the weaker fingers (4-5). These fingers will be strengthened with a little extra practice.

Musical notation for exercise No. 2, measures 1-8. The exercise is in 4/4 time. The right hand (RH) moves up and the left hand (LH) moves down in contrary motion. Fingering is indicated above and below notes.

No. 3

First system of musical notation for No. 3. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The melody in the treble clef starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The bass clef accompaniment starts with a quarter note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated above the notes in the treble clef, and 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated below the notes in the bass clef.

Second system of musical notation for No. 3. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The melody in the treble clef continues with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5. The bass clef accompaniment continues with quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4. Fingering numbers 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 are indicated above the notes in the treble clef, and 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 are indicated below the notes in the bass clef. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

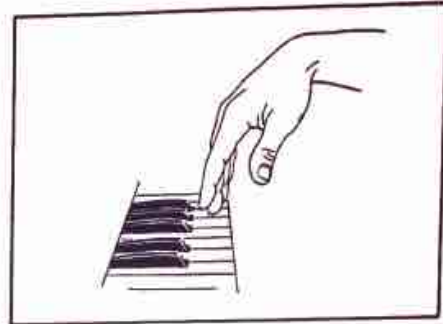
No. 4

First system of musical notation for No. 4. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The melody in the treble clef starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The bass clef accompaniment starts with a quarter note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2 are indicated above the notes in the treble clef, and 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2 are indicated below the notes in the bass clef.

Second system of musical notation for No. 4. It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The melody in the treble clef continues with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5. The bass clef accompaniment continues with quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4. Fingering numbers 1, 3, 5, 3, and 1 are indicated above the notes in the treble clef, and 1, 3, 5, 3, and 1 are indicated below the notes in the bass clef. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

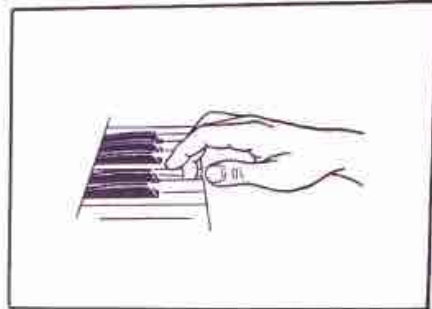
Wrist-Lifts (DANGLE & DROP, LOWER & LIFT)

1. DANGLE the right hand over E above middle C with the forearm HIGH. Let the hand hang limply from the wrist, with the tip of the 3rd finger a few inches above the key.



DANGLE
and
DROP

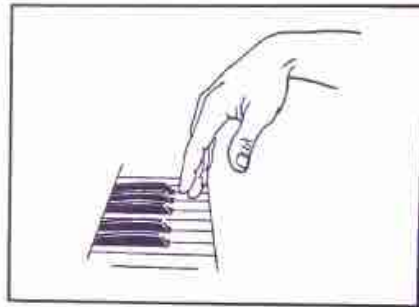
2. DROP the tip of 3 into the key.



LOWER
the
forearm

3. LOWER the forearm until the wrist is just about level with the tip of the 3rd finger. Do this in one continuous motion as you drop into the key on the count of "ONE."

4. LIFT the finger off the key by raising the forearm. The wrist will follow, then the fingers. Do this with a relaxed motion, on the count of "TWO."



LIFT
the
forearm

You are now back in starting position to repeat the exercise.

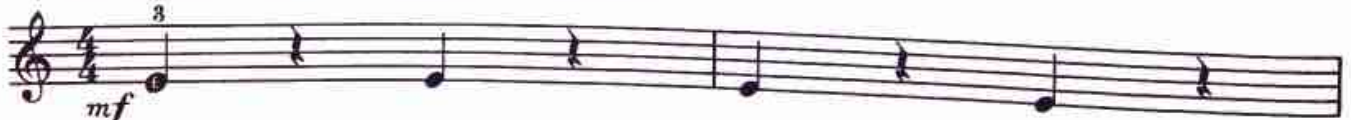
These exercises will make your wrists more relaxed and flexible, and will help you produce more beautiful tones.

No. 1

DROP on "ONE," LIFT on "TWO," DROP on "THREE," LIFT on "FOUR," etc.

Slowly

RH DROP, LIFT, DROP, LIFT, etc.



COUNT: "ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR," etc.

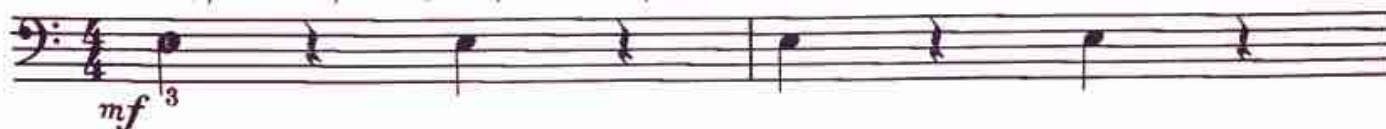


No. 2

Same exercise, using LEFT HAND on E below Middle C.

Slowly

LH DROP, LIFT, DROP, LIFT, etc.



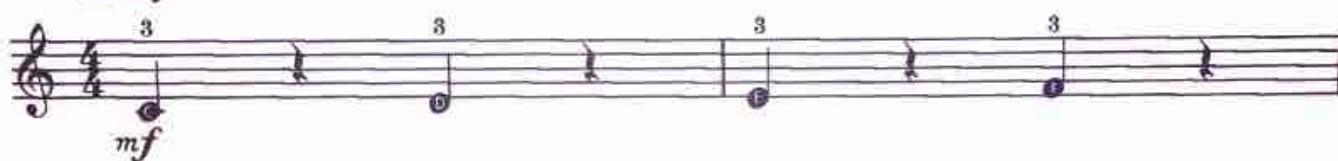
COUNT: "ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR," etc.



No. 3

Now try dropping the RH 3rd finger into different keys!

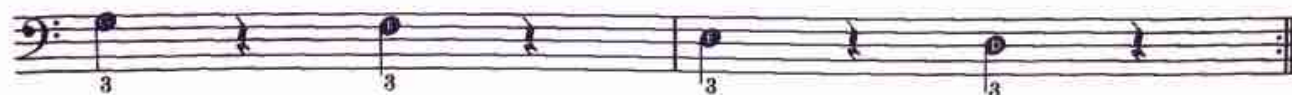
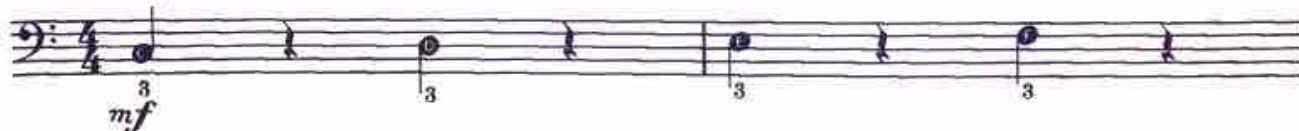
Slowly



No. 4

Now drop LH 3 into different keys.

Slowly



ADDING DEEP-BREATHING

Repeat Nos. 1-4 as follows:

- Take a deep breath as you dangle the hand from the wrist.
- Exhale slowly, expelling all the air from your lungs, as you DROP into the key.
- Inhale slowly and deeply as you LIFT the finger off the key.
- Continue the exercise, repeating steps b) & c).

Drops & Lifts On Melodic 2nds & 3rds

Breathe normally as you play these exercises.

No. 1 Melodic 2nds

In this exercise the hand position changes in each measure.

Connect each pair of notes smoothly together, dropping 2 on the first note and lifting 3 off the second note in one relaxed, continuous motion.

Notice that the RH begins with 2 & 3 on C & D and moves up to 2 & 3 on D & E, etc.

Moderately slow

COUNT: "DROP-LIFT - 3 - 4," etc.

(Continue up the keyboard as far as you wish.)

The LH begins with 2 & 3 on G & F and moves down to 2 & 3 on F & E, etc.

(Continue down the keyboard as far as you wish.)

No. 2 Melodic 3rds

The hand position changes in each measure.

Connect each pair of notes smoothly together, dropping 2 on the first note and lifting 4 off the second note in one relaxed, continuous motion.

The RH begins with 2 & 4 on C & E and moves up to 2 & 4 on E & F, etc.

Moderately slow

(Continue up the keyboard as far as you wish.)

The LH begins with 2 & 4 on G & E and moves down to 2 & 4 on F & D, etc.

(Continue down the keyboard as far as you wish.)

Drops & Lifts On Harmonic 2nds & 3rds

No. 1 Harmonic 2nds

The hand position changes in each measure.

Drop RH 2 & 3 on C & D. Lift off. In the next measure move 2 & 3 up to D & E, etc.

Moderately slow

COUNT: "DROP-LIFT - 3 - 4," etc.

(Continue up the keyboard as far as you like.)

Drop LH 3 & 2 on LH F & G. In the next measure move 3 down to E & F, etc.

(Continue down the keyboard as far as you like.)

No. 2 Harmonic 3rds

The hand position changes in each measure.

Drop RH 2 & 4 on C & E. Lift off. In the next measure move 2 & 4 up to D & F, etc.

Moderately slow

(Continue up the keyboard as far as you like.)

Drop LH 4 & 2 on E & G. In the next measure move 4 & 2 down to D & F, etc.

(Continue down the keyboard as far as you like.)