

Daily Warm-Ups for All Pianists

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The art of playing music is a combination of mental and physical skills. In order to achieve the highest level of performance, these skills have to be coordinated. The only way to become coordinated is to PRACTICE and PRACTICE and PRACTICE!!! It's a never ending process if you want to improve your playing.

To practice efficiently is an art in itself. There are countless musicians that have not, or never will reach their full potential, due to the lack of proper practice technique. Being a jazz musician and teacher myself, I see many jazz students that are lacking basic technique and practice skills. I try to make my students understand that in order to improvise and use the freedom of jazz, we need to have good technique so our instruments do not become an obstacle to our creativity. I highly recommend that all jazz piano students study classical piano to build a solid foundation on their instrument. Classical music can only sound good if it is approached with seriousness and with great skill.

It is important to know that one good hour of organized practice is far better than four hours of unorganized practice. Since practicing is very time consuming, it must be done right; otherwise we will never have time to become good musicians.

A daily warm up routine should be established for several reasons:

1. It will improve your technique.
2. It will help you to focus on your instrument on a daily basis.
3. It will help prevent injuries.

The following routine should be practiced with a metronome. It's important to set the metronome to a tempo that you are able to manage. Do not increase the speed if your playing is sloppy! Instead, slow it down and concentrate!

1. Basic finger warm up:

Place your hands on the keys. Keep your fingers on the keys at all times, only moving the fingers that you are using. It will help you to separate and make your fingers independent.

After going through the eight bars, do it with the alternate fingerings indicated.

1. 1 2 3 4 5
2. 2 1 3 4 5
3. 2 3 1 4 5
4. 2 3 4 1 5

1. 5 4 3 2 1
2. 5 5 3 1 2
3. 5 4 1 3 2
4. 5 1 4 3 2

2. Scales:

Play the scales using the indicated fingerings. Set the metronome to a comfortable speed and play four octaves up and down. Concentrate on one key at a time. Don't switch keys until you fully master the one you are working on.

Hint: Remember what note the fourth finger is on.

Major Scales

Harmonic Minor Scales

The image displays three rows of musical notation for Harmonic Minor Scales. Each row contains two staves (treble and bass clef) and four measures of music. The scales are:

- Row 1: B-flat major (B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat), D major (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D), B-flat major (B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat).
- Row 2: D major (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D), B-flat major (B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat), D major (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D).
- Row 3: D major (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D), B-flat major (B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat), D major (D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D).

 Fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for each note, and slurs indicate the phrasing of the scales.

3. Broken Chords:

Major

The image shows a musical exercise for Broken Chords in Major. It consists of two staves in C major, 4/4 time. The right hand plays a sequence of broken chords with the fingering: 1 2 3 4 1 2 4 5 1 2 3 5. The left hand plays a corresponding bass line with the fingering: 5 3 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 3 2 1.

Minor:

The image shows a musical exercise for Broken Chords in Minor. It consists of two staves in B-flat major (D minor), 4/4 time. The right hand plays a sequence of broken chords with the fingering: 1 2 3 4 1 2 4 5 1 2 3 5. The left hand plays a corresponding bass line with the fingering: 5 4 2 1 5 4 2 1 5 3 2 1.

Note: Finger 4 on E \flat .
Same in all minor keys.

4. Arpeggios:

The following chart shows the fingering for all the triad arpeggios in Major and minor. Play all the arpeggios like the example above.

Key	CMaj	Cmin	D♭Maj	D♭min	DMaj	Dmin	E♭Maj	E♭min	EMaj	Emin	FMaj	Fmin
Right Hand	1231	1231	2124	2124	1231	1231	2124	1231	1231	1231	1231	1231
Left Hand	5321	5421	2142	2142	5321	5421	2142	5421	5321	5421	5421	5421
Key	F♯Maj	F♯min	GMaj	Gmin	A♭Maj	A♭min	AMaj	Amin	B♭Maj	B♭min	BMaj	Bmin
Right Hand	1231	2124	1231	1231	2124	2124	1231	1231	2124	2312	1231	1221
Left Hand	5321	2142	5321	5421	2142	2142	5321	5421	2142	3213	5321	5421

Important:

There are two different ways of practicing the scales: broken chords and the arpeggios.

1. Practice with the fingers close to the keys in order to develop speed.
2. Practice with the fingers moving like hammers to develop strength.

I highly recommend switching between these two approaches.

Daily Schedule:

1. Finger warm-up.
2. Pick the key of the day.
3. Major scale.
4. Harmonic minor scale.
5. Broken chords (major and minor).
6. Arpeggios (major and minor).

By making this a daily routine, you will see improvement in your playing very soon.

Good Luck,

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