

Piano Guide's
Introduction to
Piano for Adult
Beginners

Lesson One

Pages 7-14 from
The Piano Guide Book One
By
Peter Hostage

pianoguide.net

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CHAPTER ONE: FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

In this chapter we will learn about:

- The Piano Keyboard
- The Musical Alphabet
- The Time Signature
- The Rhythm Value of Notes
- The Finger Numbers
- How To Hold Your Fingers
- How To Sit At The Piano
- The C Major 5 Finger Position

Let's get started!

THE PIANO KEYBOARD

The piano keyboard has white and black keys. The groups of two and three black keys are the distinguishing features that help us find the notes we are looking for. The keys to the left are the lower pitched notes, and are usually played by the left hand. The keys on the right are higher pitched notes and usually played by the right hand.



← *Low*

High →



Set of 2
black keys

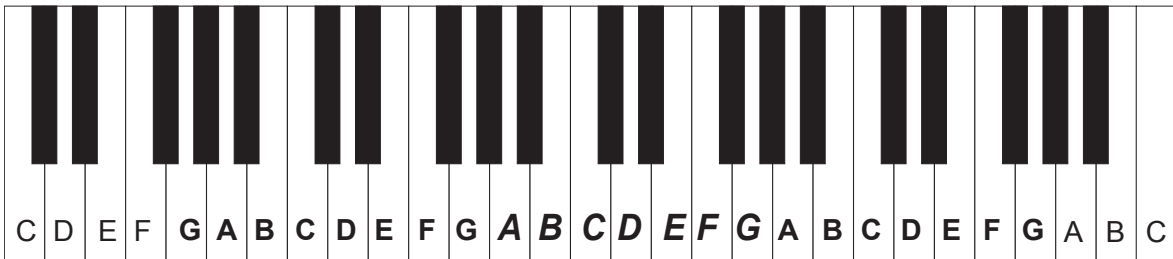


Set of 3
black keys

THE MUSICAL ALPHABET:

....*a, b, c, d, e, f, g, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, etc....*

The musical alphabet is a repeating group of seven letters, *A, B, C, D, E, F, G*; which denote the seven different white keys on the keyboard.



Memorize the note names!

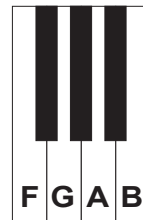
First, memorize A's location in the group of three black keys. Find all of the A's on the keyboard. Say the letter name out loud as you play the note.



Now do the same with the other six key letter names: *B, C, D, E, F, G*.



Now memorize the note names as a set around the group of two black keys (*C, D, E*), and around the group of three black keys (*F, G, A, B*).



When you have memorized the names of all the notes, you are ready to move on!

THE TIME SIGNATURE



Top Number:
number of beats per measure

Bottom Number:
what kind of note receives *one* count

The **time signature** is the two stacked numbers at the beginning of a piece of music. The top number tells us how many beats or counts per measure. (A measure is a section of music on the staff between the vertical lines.)

The bottom number tells us what kind of note receives one count or beat.

In the above example, 4/4 time, there are four beats in each measure, and each count has a value of a quarter note. This means we will count “one - two - three - four” for each measure. This is also called “common time,” and we will use this time signature in the beginning examples.

THE RHYTHM VALUE OF NOTES



Whole Note:
hold for *four* counts



Half Note:
hold for *two* counts



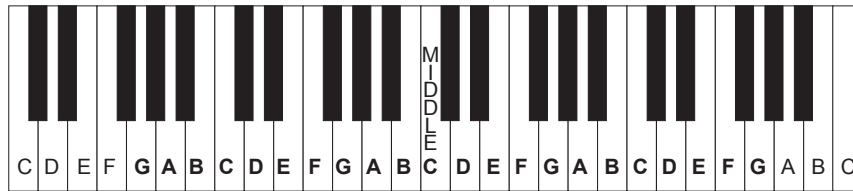
Quarter Note:
hold for *one* count

The **whole note**, which looks like a circle or zero, is held for four counts, or the whole measure. When the note is played, count “one - two - three - four.” Release the note after you’ve said “four.”

The **half note** looks similar to the whole note, but has a vertical stem, that could go up or down. The half note is held for two counts, or half of the measure. When the half note is played, count “one - two.” Release the note after you’ve said “two.”

The **quarter note** looks similar to the half note, but the note “head” is filled in. The quarter note is held for one count, or a quarter of the measure. Play the note, count “one,” then release the note.

RHYTHM EXERCISES: COUNT WHOLE, HALF & QUARTER NOTES



We will begin by playing these rhythm exercises on one note, **middle C**, so you can concentrate on counting. Middle C is the “C” note closest to the center of the keyboard. (Often the brand name is written above the center of the keyboard.)

Count *out loud* with a slow, steady rhythm. Counting out loud helps you concentrate!



Listen to the MP3 file "Rhythm Exercise 1" to hear what this exercise sounds like.

1. $\frac{4}{4}$ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Count: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

2. $\frac{4}{4}$ | ○ | ○ ○ | ○ | ○ ○ |

Count: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 3 - 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 3 - 4

3. $\frac{4}{4}$ | ○ | ○ ○ | ○ ○ ○ ○ | ○ ○ |

Count: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 1 - 2 3 - 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 - 4

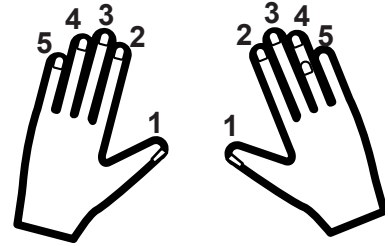
4. $\frac{4}{4}$ | ○ | ○ ○ ○ ○ | ○ ○ ○ ○ | ○ ○ |

Count: 1-2-3-4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1-2 3-4

THE FINGER NUMBERS

The fingers are numbered 1 through 5, with the #1's being the thumbs on each hand, the #2's are the index fingers, the #3's are the middle fingers, the #4's are the ring fingers, and the #5's are the "pinky" fingers.

Finger numbers tell us what five finger position on the keyboard our hands should be placed. One finger number implies the position of the other fingers. For example, if the written music has a small "1" over a "C" note played by the right hand, it is also telling us that our #2 will play "D," #3 will play "E," #4 will play "F," and #5 will play "G."



HOW TO HOLD YOUR FINGERS

Curl your fingers as if you are holding a ball. Do not lay your fingers flat on the keys! Keep your wrists above the level of the keys. Let your finger tips press down on the keys. Your fingers should support the weight of your arms.



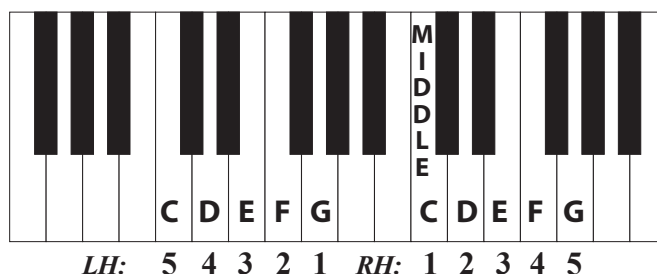
HOW TO SIT AT THE PIANO

Sit at the piano with your arms slightly in front of your torso. Hold your back straight, but comfortably relaxed.



Now we're ready to learn how to play piano!

THE C MAJOR FIVE FINGER POSITION



To play the C major five finger position, place your right hand (*RH*) first finger on “middle” C, the C closest to the center of the keyboard. Place your second finger on D, third finger on E, fourth finger on F and your fifth finger on G.

Place your left hand (*LH*) fifth finger on the next C to the left of middle C (one octave below), your fourth finger on D, third finger on E, second finger on F and first finger on G.

First, play and count out loud, keeping steady time. Second, play and sing the notes, still keeping time. (Don’t worry if you don’t sing well, just try to sing the notes. It’s good for ear-training!)

Play the right hand, then the left hand. Play it as many times as it takes to make it sound comfortable and easy.



	<i>Sing:</i>	C	D	E	F	G	F	E	D	C	D	E	F	G	G
<i>Right Hand:</i>															
<i>Count:</i>		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1 - 2	3 - 4

	<i>Sing:</i>	G	F	E	D	C	D	E	F	G	F	E	D	C	C
<i>Left Hand:</i>															
<i>Count:</i>		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1 - 2	3 - 4

Play the following two songs numerous times before moving on.



Au Clair De La Lune

Sing: C C C D E D C E D D C

Right Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 - 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Sing: C C C D E D C E D D C

Left Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 - 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4



Right, Left, Right Blues

Sing: C C E G C E G C D E F G

Right Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Sing: F F D C F D C C D E F C

Left Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Sing: G F D F G F D F C E G C

Right Hand:

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 4 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

CHAPTER ONE REVIEW QUIZ

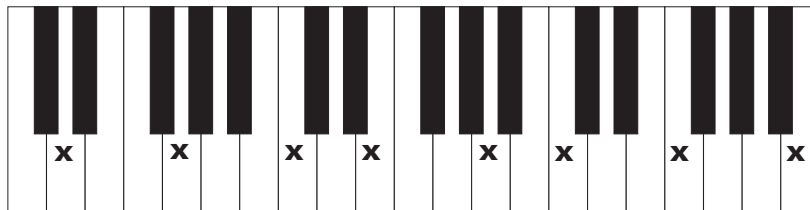
1. Write the letters of the musical alphabet:

___ _ _ _ _

2. Write the letters of the musical alphabet in reverse order:

___ _ _ _ _

3. Write the letter name of each marked key, on the key, under the X.



4. The top number of the time signature tells us how many _____ per measure.

5. In the 4/4 time signature, the bottom number tells us that a _____ note receives one beat.

6. In the C major 5 finger position, the left hand fourth finger will be on the _____ key.

7. A whole note receives _____ beats or counts.

8. Fill in the missing notes to make the measures complete:



