

Piano Lessons and Your Instrument

Whether you have a full size piano or an electronic keyboard, or even an organ, these lessons will teach you how to play your keyboard instrument.

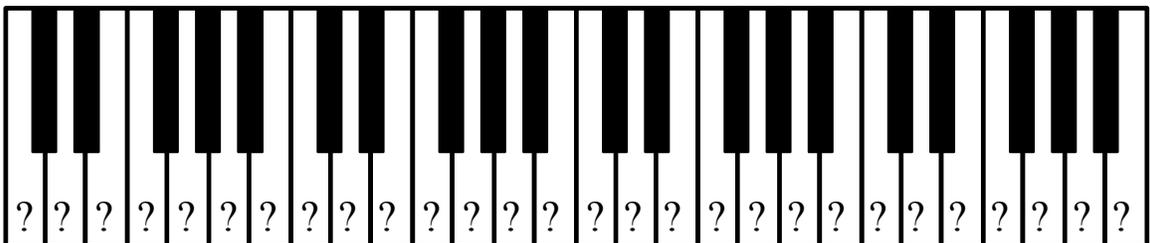


What kind of keyboard instrument are you using for these lessons? If you are using an electric keyboard, how many keys (including the black ones) does it have?

I recommend a keyboard instrument with at least 61 keys on it.

For simplicity, I will now start to refer to "your keyboard instrument" as "your piano."

White Keys, Black Keys...Where do I begin?



Just looking at your piano can be overwhelming! You may wonder, "How am I ever going to learn all these notes?"

Well, you have come to the right place.

I am going to teach you how to "shrink" your piano and become familiar with all the keys.

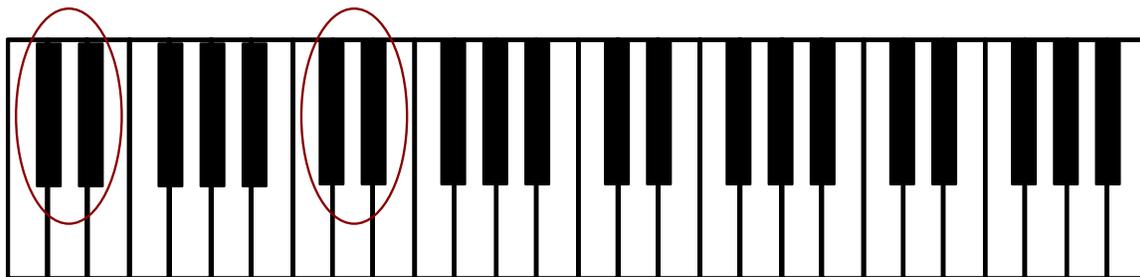
Groups of Two and Three Black Keys

Look at your piano and find the black keys that are grouped in two's. You will see groups of two and groups of three.

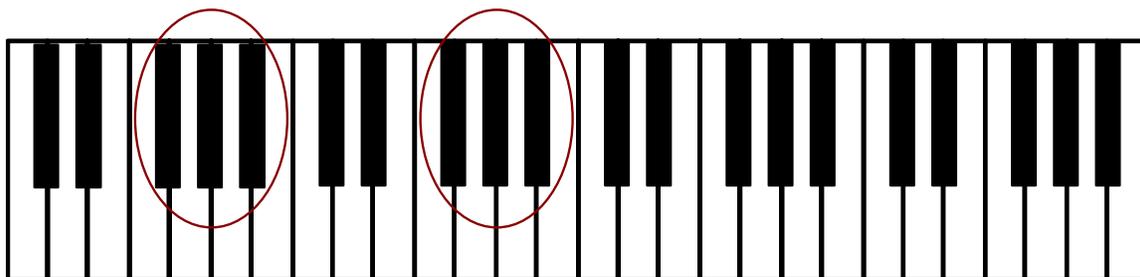
Find each group of two, and play them. The first groups of two are shown with a circle around them. Find and play all of the groups of two your piano, then circle the remaining groups of two on the piano diagram shown below.

When you find each group, play it with the hand that is closest to the group that you find. For example, when you find the groups of two that are easy to reach with your left hand, then play them with your left hand. When you find the groups of two that are closest to your right hand, then play them with your right hand.

You may use any fingers you are comfortable with.



Now do the same exercise except find and play all the groups of three black keys, again, using the hand closest to the groups that you find.



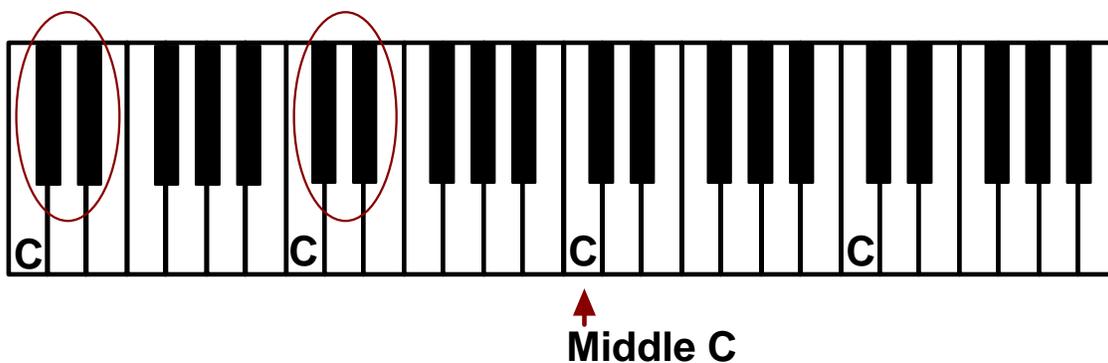
Middle C

Now that you are comfortable with finding the groups of two black keys and the groups of three black keys, it's time to talk about the white keys.

As you look at the piano on this page, you will notice that there is a letter "C" on the white key that is found on the left side of each group of two black keys.

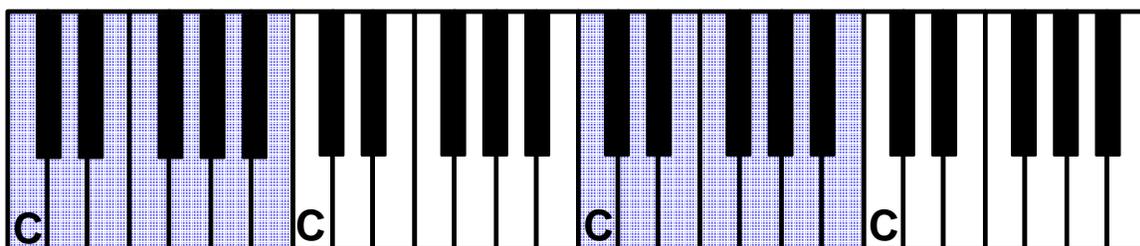
Now look at your piano and find and play all the C's. After you have done that, find the C that is closest to the exact middle of your piano and that one is called **MIDDLE C**.

Continue to practice finding all the C's on your piano and finding Middle C until it is very easy for you.



Piano Sections

Here you will see that I divided the white keys to signify different sections. Look closely, can you figure out how I divided the piano into sections?



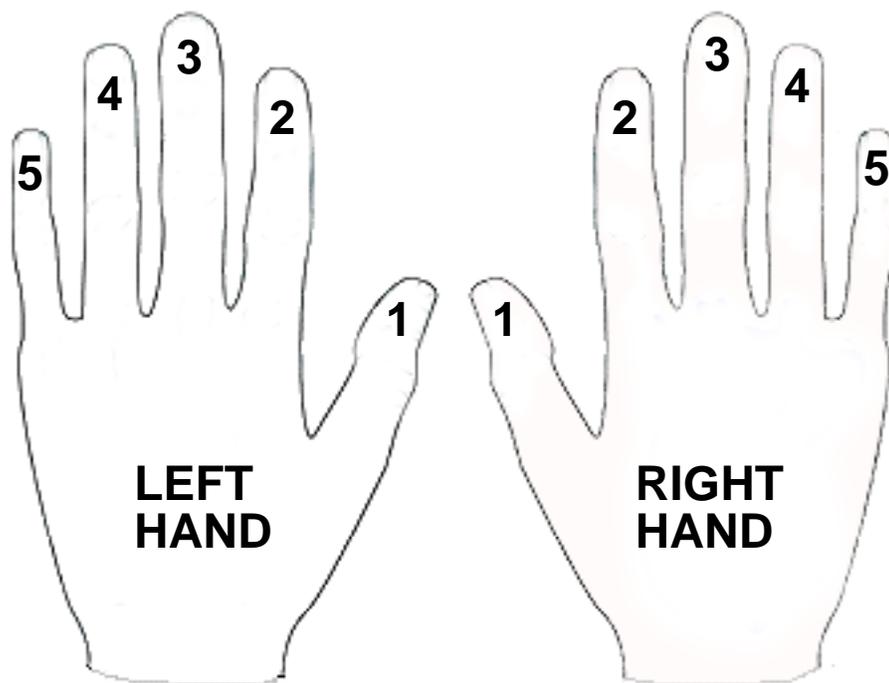
Each section starts with a C and includes the next 6 white keys, making 7 keys in a section.

Notice that each section of 7 keys includes a group of 2 black keys and a group of 3 black keys.

The piano is made up of the same 7 keys, over and over and over again.

Now look at your piano and instead of feeling like there are A LOT of keys, look at it in sections, kind of like a puzzle. An easy way to see the piano in sections is to look at the groups of 2 black keys.

Each group of two black keys starts with a C and represents a “7 key” section of the piano.



Are you ready to start having some fun? Let's play the piano!

First we are going to give each of your fingers a number....

Your thumb is number 1,

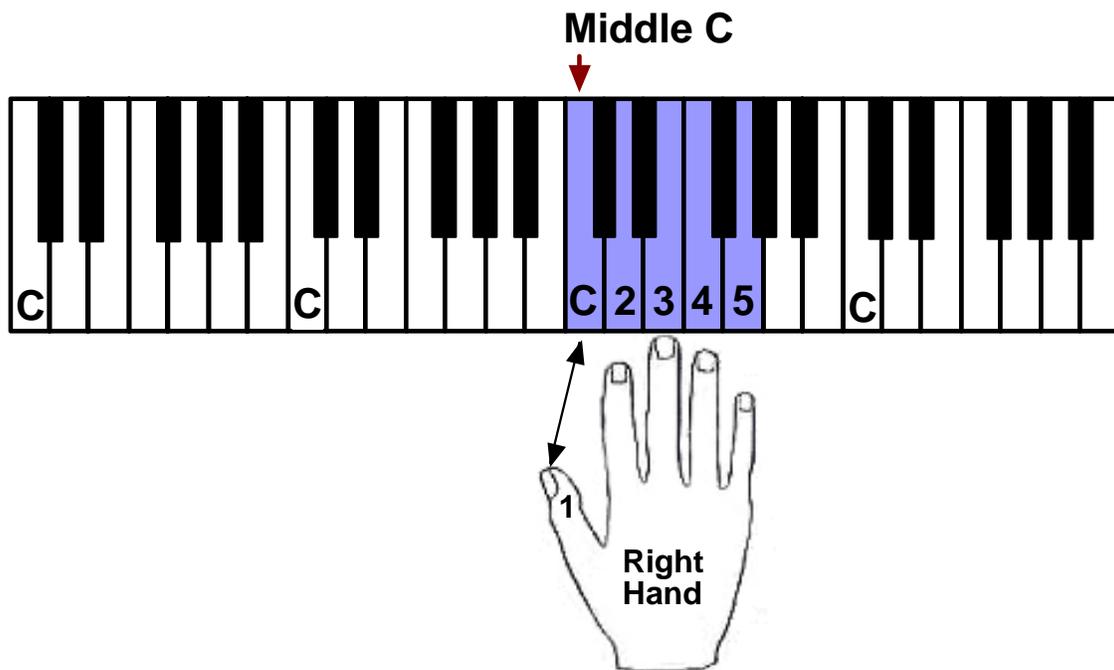
your next finger is number 2,

next is number 3, then number 4 and finally your little finger is number 5.

Place your **RIGHT HAND THUMB** on **MIDDLE C**.

Then place each of your fingers, one at a time, on the next 4 white keys. If you did it right, your thumb (remember to use your right hand only) will be on MIDDLE C and each one of your other 4 fingers will be resting on one key each. You should be covering 5 keys in a row with 5 fingers.

The next page will show you if you did it right.



Did you do it right? Look at the piano on this page and see if you have your fingers resting on the correct keys.

If your fingers are in the correct position, congratulations!

The position you are in is called **Middle C Position**.

Now, one at a time, play each key once. Do not move your hand and do not move your fingers.

You should be playing Middle C with your *thumb*,

the next key with your *#2 finger*,

the next key with *#3 finger*,

next key with *#4 finger*,

the last key with *#5 finger*.

If you played it right, with the correct fingers, then go ahead and play it over and over and over again. (Only use your right hand!)

Get really comfortable with it. Play it fast, play it slow, play it backwards, and play it out of order. **ALWAYS** play each key with the finger that is assigned to it!

Right Hand Practice

With your *right hand* in Middle C position, play the following three patterns.

Play C with your thumb.

Play the keys the finger numbers are resting on.

DO NOT MOVE OUT OF MIDDLE C POSITION!

DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR FINGERS WHILE PLAYING!

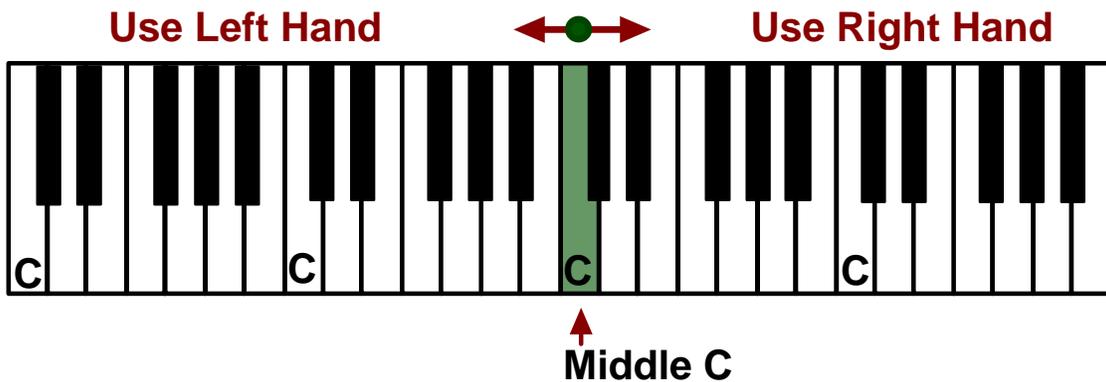
C 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 C

3 5 3 3 2 4 2 2 C

5 3 4 2 3 C 2 5 C

Which hand do I use and when?

Notice on the piano below that there is a dot with arrows pointing in opposite directions. This is showing you that whenever you play keys that are below Middle C, you will play with your left hand and whenever you play keys that are above Middle C, you will play with your right hand. (You were playing keys on and above Middle C on the previous page, that is why you were instructed to use your right hand.)



This is a rule with exceptions.

There are times when the right hand will play below Middle C and times when the left hand will play above Middle C.

However, for now, we are going to follow the general rule until later.

Left Hand C Position

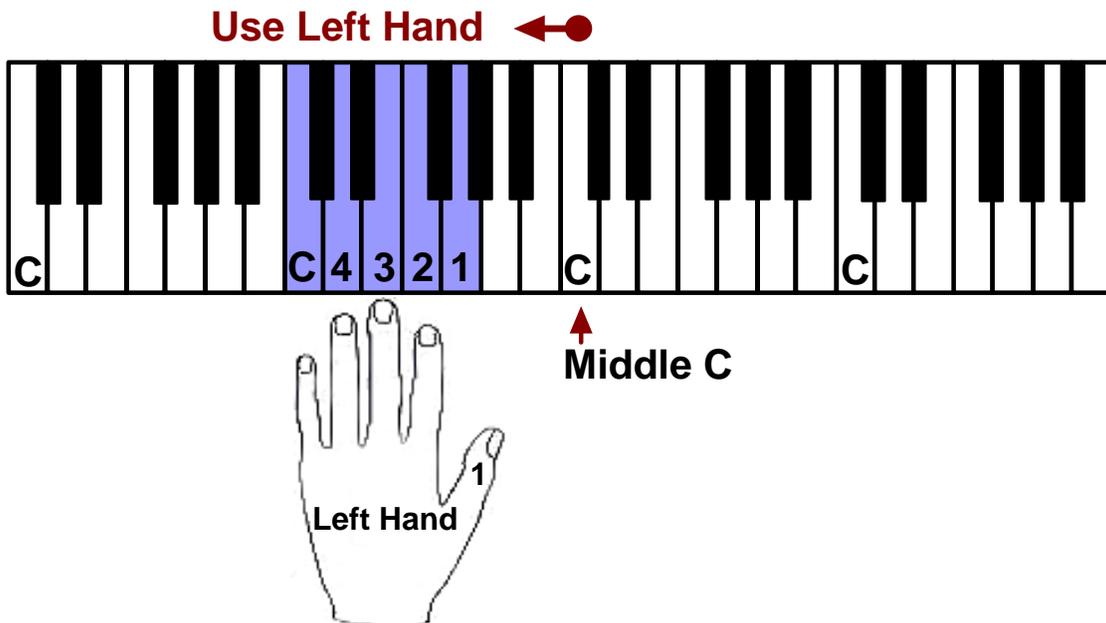
On the piano below, you will see that I shaded a C position section below Middle C.

Look closely at the numbers: **C 4 3 2 1** are written on the keys instead of **C 2 3 4 5**.

You will see why when you place your **LEFT** hand on the shaded section, matching the fingers indicated. Notice that when your left hand is in C position, your thumb is *not* the finger that you would use on the C.

Place your **LEFT** hand in C position on your piano. **PLAY:**

C 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 C



Shrinking Your Piano

Here is the final step to "shrinking your piano" and getting familiar with playing all over the piano.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS:

1. Place your right hand in Middle C position with your thumb on Middle C. Play any patterns you like and at different speeds. When finished, move your right hand up (to the right) to a different C section of the piano (the notes will sound higher) and with your thumb on C (will not be Middle C), again play all the patterns that you like. Continue to move your right hand to different sections and play whatever you like.

(Make sure that the sections you choose are **above** Middle C)

2. Do the same as above, except do it with your left hand.

Remember, your left hand will be placed in a C position with your #5 finger on the C. Again, move your hand around and play in different C sections of the **lower** part of the piano, (below Middle C).

3. If you are very brave and want to try something new, place both hands on the piano, each in a different C section and play both hands at the same time. Make sure you match the same key with the same key in each hand. (Not same finger numbers)

EXAMPLE:

When playing with both hands, C with your right hand thumb will match the C with your left hand #5 finger, and so forth. It's a little tricky at first, but you can do it!

Have fun and good luck! I'll see you in Lesson 2!

Marching

1. Which finger do you place on the first note?
2. There are several position changes. Highlight the circled changes.
3. The numbers in parenthesis are for you to double check your position.
4. Make sure when playing the quarter note chords in each measure that you let go after 1 count and rest (see the quarter rests?) for 1 count.
5. Count out loud and keep your eyes on the music.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains four measures of music. The first measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The second measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The third measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The fourth measure has a circled '5' above it and a '(5)' below it. The bass staff contains four measures of music, each with a quarter note chord followed by a quarter rest. The first measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The second measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The third measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(1)' below it. The fourth measure has a circled '5' above it and a '(5)' below it. The counting '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' is written below the first and fourth measures of both staves.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains four measures of music. The first measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(3)' below it. The second measure has a circled '4' above it and a '(2)' below it. The third measure has a circled '1' above it and a '(1)' below it. The fourth measure has a circled '5' above it and a '(5)' below it. The bass staff contains four measures of music, each with a quarter note chord followed by a quarter rest. The first measure has a circled '3' above it and a '(3)' below it. The second measure has a circled '4' above it and a '(2)' below it. The third measure has a circled '1' above it and a '(1)' below it. The fourth measure has a circled '5' above it and a '(5)' below it.