



Piano Academy Technique Chart Help and Instructions

Primer Level

Grandma's House/Dog's House:

Play Grandma's House (3 black keys) and white keys on either side (F and B) in a group. Find all Grandma's Houses on the keyboard.

Repeat with Dog House, playing two black keys with fingers 2 and 3, plus B, E, and F.

Chicken Pecking:

Brace finger 3 with the thumb; play each note from one C up to the next C and back down, using only wrist motion like a chicken pecking. Hands Separate Only.

Smash Blocks with white keys:

With thumb (RH) or pinky (LH) on C, place each finger on the next consecutive white note and play all five fingers at the same time, maintaining a good piano hand shape. Move the whole hand up by one note at a time, always "smashing" five notes together. Go up to the next C and back down.

Thumb/Pinky Bridge:

Similar to the previous exercise, but only play the thumb and pinky (start on C and G). Move up to the next C and back down. Focus should be playing on the corners of the thumb and pinky and maintaining a relaxed wrist and good curved and position.

C Position 5- Finger Pattern:

Start the hand in C position. Play fingers 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 in RH or 5-4-3-2-1-2-3-4-5 in LH, in each of the following ways:

High-Loud Fingers (up-straight, down-curved, relax)

Separated

Close-Loud Fingers (Fingers stay close, but still with a firm, loud tone.)

Skipping D (C-E-F-G-A-G-F-E-C)

Skipping E (C-D-F-G-A-G-F-D-C)

Skipping F (C-D-E-G-A-G-E-D-C)

Skipping G (C-D-E-F-A-F-E-D-C)

Piano Safari Exercises:

“Reminder Videos” for parents and students to watch at home are available on pianosafari.com (go to the Videos page, then click “Reminder Videos” and go to “Technical Exercises and Rote Pieces”).

LEVEL 1

5 Finger Patterns: Both Major and Minor Instructions (Minor only H.T.)

Hands separately:

- Smashers- Smash all 5 fingers together, each one getting their own note, and use the lion paw arm weight to find all of the 5 finger pattern on the piano.
- Jump-up/Ski Down: Combining smashers and Hand over hand, Smash all 5 notes going up, separate them coming down.

Hands together:

- Hand over Hand- L.H, R.H., L.H., R.H., Plus one note. Each pattern is separated but the hands are overlapping.
- Contrary- Both hands on the same 5-finger pattern, but you use the same fingering, not the same notes
- Parallel- Both hands on the same 5-finger pattern, but the same notes, different fingers.

Block/Broken

Blocked: Fingering is 5-3-1 for L.H. and 1-3-5 for R.H. Played like on hand over hand. Each block is played for three beats

Broken: Same thing as blocked, but each finger/note is played separately. Each note getting one beat.

Cadence: I-V7-I

Using C major as an example, C-E-G (C Major triad), to B-F-G (G Dominant 7th), back to C Major Triad. It is a common progression used in most pieces, Kids can harmonize using these chords with almost any piece! :)

LEVEL 2

Tetrachords:

A tetrachord is a pattern of Whole Steps and Half Steps.

A half step is one note to the next without skipping one. Ex. C to C# or E to F.

A Whole step is two half steps or skipping one note. Ex. C-D, or E to F#

Example: C Major Tetrachord: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C

Pattern of W/H steps: Whole-Whole-Half, Whole-Whole-Whole-Half

Fingering: L.H. 5-4-3-2, 2-3-4-5 R.H. Thumbs do not play.

Pattern applies to every single Major key.

Scales:

The pattern for the scales is the same whole/half pattern of the tetrachords, just played with one hand. The students should only play these after they have successfully learned the tetrachords in every key.

For fingering:

C RH 1 231234 RH 1 23

 LH (1)432132 LH (1)42

The same fingering is used for G, D, A, and E.

5th fingers are used as the "turnaround keys" They are not part of the fingering pattern.

For the Black Keys:

D-flat/ RH 2312341

C# LH 3214321

G-flat RH 2341231

/F# LH 4321321

C-flat RH 1 231234

/B LH (1)321432

Others

A-flat RH 3412312

 LH 3214321

E-flat RH 3123412

 LH 3214321

B-flat RH 4123123

 LH 3214321

F RH 1 234123

 LH (1)432132

Cadence: I-IV-I

Using C Major as an example, C Major Triad (C-E-G), to F Major in inversion (C-F-A) back to C Major.

Using C Minor as an example: C minor Triad (C-Eb-G) to F minor in inversion (C-F-Ab) back to C minor.

Chords:

Using C Major as an example: Play C Major Triad as one, then play separated, then back together. Hands together.

Arpeggios:

Similar to Block/Broken, Arpeggios are played with one hand.

Fingering for arpeggios:

C RH 1 23
 LH (1)42

The same fingering is used for G, and F.

D RH 123
 LH (1)32

The same fingering is used for A, B, and E.

Others

Db RH 412
 LH 214

Same for Eb and Ab.

Bb RH 412
 LH 321

LEVEL 3

Scales:

Add Natural and Harmonic minor.

Natural is found by going up three half-steps and using that key signature.

Example: C minor- E-flat Major, C-D-Eb-F-G-Ab-Bb-C

To make it Harmonic minor, you raise the 7th note of the scale a half-step.

Example: C harmonic minor: C-D-Eb-F-G-Ab-B-C

Chords:

Triads and Inversions. You take the bottom note and put it on the top.

Example: C-E-G, 1st Inversion (E-G-C), 2nd Inversion (G-C-E)

Cadence:

Put the two previously learned cadences together to form I-IV-I-V7-I

Arpeggios:

Add another octave. Reminder: The 5th finger is only a “turnaround” finger.

LEVEL 4

Scales:

Add Melodic Minor.

Melodic is found by raising the 6th and 7th scale degrees going up, and lowering them back down to natural minor on the way down.

Example: C-D-Eb-F-G-A-B-C, C-Bb-Ab-G-F-Eb-D-C

Chords:

Adding Diminished and Augmented

Diminished: Minor triad with a flat 5 (C-Eb-Gb)

Augmented: Major triad with a sharp 5. (C-E-G#)

Cadence:

Adding in Inversions with I-IV-I-V7-I

Arpeggios:

Adding more octaves, as well as Diminished 7th Arpeggios.

There are only 3 diminished patterns:

C-Eb-Gb-Bbb (RH 2341, LH 1432)

D-F-Ab-Cbb (RH 2341, LH 2143)

E-G-Bb-Db (RH 1234, LH 2143)

You can start on any note in the pattern.

Example: If you start on Eb, the pattern would be Eb-Gb-Bbb-C, (RH 3412 LH 4321)