

## Good Habits

When you repeat a movement or behaviour several times, it becomes a habit. This means you will find yourself automatically reaching for this movement or behaviour, whether it's helpful for you or not.

You will find a habit is easier to do than a non-habit. That doesn't mean the habit is the better way.

To make a new habit we have to be fully aware while moving or thinking. We must concentrate hard to make ourselves learn it, which takes some energy and discipline.

Once you have done this relatively small amount of work, you will have a new habit that will help you for the rest of your piano playing days. You can now focus on other aspects of music with new tools at your disposal.

Here is a list of essential habits we would wish to instill in ourselves to be good pianists:

- Position of body
- Fingertips positioned on adjacent notes
- Relaxed hands
- Using arm weight not muscle
- Using sense of touch and hearing, not sight
- Following the music one note at a time

Here is a list of common default habits that exist in beginners that we have to work to replace:

- Staring at hands
- Lifting fingers away from the keys
- Tension in fingers
- Losing track of the music due to lapses in concentration
- Always starting from the beginning if a mistake is made

Try replacing a bad habit with a good one. Repetition will make it happen, maybe 5 or 10 times will be enough, sometimes it takes several attempts over a series of days.

Remember that to practice effectively, you must concentrate for a period of time, then take a rest. If you start making mistakes, rest for a few minutes, then try again.

You will find the brain needs time to absorb the information and it cannot concentrate effectively for too long at a time, so resting periodically allows you to achieve more in each practice session.