



# LEARN 36 POPULAR SONGS IN 5 DAYS

A GUIDED  
WORKBOOK BY  
JACQUES HOPKINS

# WELCOME!



Hi! Jacques here. Thanks for grabbing a copy of my free workbook! Over 60,000 people from all over the world have downloaded this workbook to begin learning piano in a new and fun way.

I took traditional piano lessons for 12 years. I hated all the boring theory and practice. At the end of those 12 years, I could literally only play 2 songs on the piano. Yuck!

Thankfully, I've developed a better way to play and teach piano. It's fun. It's fast. So... it's pretty much the exact opposite of your typical piano lessons. :)

Go through these 5 lessons and if you enjoy this way of learning piano, you may be a good fit for my full 21-day program.

I'm looking forward to being your guide on this journey!

# DISCLAIMER

There is no guarantee that you will learn to play the piano in 5 days, 21 days, or within any particular time-frame. Results will vary according to individual backgrounds, motivation, focus, and other factors.

Any and all predictive statements here or on any of our promotional materials are intended to express the author's opinion of the potential results you can achieve while learning to play the piano. The level of success you reach while employing the techniques provided in this book is entirely up to you.

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# INTRODUCTION

"How did I get here?"

I sat at the piano bench, and all eyes were staring at me. I was the "piano guy" - but I had nothing to play.

I had been taking piano lessons for 12 years... 12 YEARS... I should've been a downright piano legend at this point, right?

Sadly, I wasn't. Someone in the group found out I had been "playing" piano for 12 years, so they asked me to play. Sure, I knew some stuff... TWO SONGS, to be exact.

So, I humbly stepped up to the challenge and played what I knew: "Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin (if you've never heard it, check it out... it took me about a year to learn by itself), and then Elton's John's "Your Song."

We were a bunch of 17-year-olds hanging out at a retreat with nothing else to do. We were having fun.

And, hey, who doesn't like showing off his skills? There also may have been one girl who I particularly wanted to impress...

# INTRODUCTION

But I digress...

After those two songs, the group wanted more. There was only one problem: I didn't know anything else.

12 years of piano lessons, and I only had two songs to show for it.

Let me repeat that, because it is SO key to my story:

**12 years of taking traditional piano lessons - the way that most people think is the best way to learn - and I knew how to play literally two songs on the piano. WHAT THE %&@#!**

I'm not sure why it took me so long to realize I had spent so much time on the piano with so few results. But now it hit me like a ton of bricks. People stared, wondering what I'd play next.

After I played those two songs and couldn't play any more, I knew something was wrong. Was it me? Was it the lessons?

What happened next would completely transform my piano-playing life.

Another guy also knew how to play piano. I mean really play. He played one song. Then another. Then another. THEN ANOTHER AND ANOTHER!

# INTRODUCTION

He seemed to know how to play everything. People requested songs, and he knew them. It didn't end.

I had to know his secret, so later that night, I tracked him down. He sat with me and showed me a way to play piano that blew my mind. It was the first time I learned what a chord was and how powerful it can be. I learned how you can add in notes to the chord to make it sound more interesting.

But the most important thing I learned is piano didn't have to be about repeating back exactly what was on a piece of paper. Instead, it could be fun. I could quickly learn new songs without reading the sheet music, and I could have the freedom to make the music my own while still maintaining the integrity of the song.

As soon as I got home from the retreat, I told my mom I wasn't going to piano lessons anymore. Honestly, she didn't really care - which was ironic, because the main reason I stuck with it for so long was that I thought it made my parents happy.

BUT I wasn't quitting the piano. I was changing how I learned and how I played.

I started playing songs I liked, and I started learning them in a few minutes instead of weeks or months.

Fast forward a few years. In 2007, I wanted to see if others wanted to learn how to play like this too. Soon, with the power of the internet, Pianoin21Days.com was born.

# INTRODUCTION

## These are Piano Lessons for "Regular" People

I'm a normal person. I wasn't born with some gift for music. I'm not a piano prodigy. I'm simply a regular person when it comes to music and the piano.

Playing piano was a hobby for much of my life. When I took traditional piano lessons growing up, it wasn't a hobby I enjoyed at all, and I rarely played between lessons.

Since learning the techniques in this book, playing piano has become my favorite hobby. And now I'm fortunate enough to say that it's also my profession. I was an engineer for eight years before deciding to become a full-time "online piano teacher." I love my job.

The method of learning and playing piano you will find in these pages is the only way I play today.

This method has enabled me to play in several bands, rack up millions of views on YouTube, and, most importantly, provided me with an enjoyable experience every time I sit down at the piano. **Shouldn't playing piano always be fun, not a chore?**

Since sharing this method, tens of thousands of my students have learned to play piano in far less time than they ever thought possible.

Will you be next?

# INTRODUCTION

Once you learn the method in this workbook, you will be learning songs in five minutes, not five weeks (or longer).

As the saying goes, I'm going to teach you to fish rather than give you a fish. What's different about Piano In 21 Days versus virtually any other piano learning method out there is that this course teaches you how to learn songs for yourself. I'm not going to teach you to just parrot certain songs that I want you to play - I'm going to teach you the techniques that will enable you to play almost any song yourself.

## Required Equipment (Pianos, Keyboards, Pedals, etc)

This book is going to work for you whether you have a piano or a keyboard. Keyboards are a more portable version of a piano. However, if you are using a keyboard, please make sure you have the following two pieces of equipment in place before proceeding:

**1 – You should have at least 49 keys.** A standard piano has 88 keys, which is ideal. There are plenty of keyboards that also have 88 keys, but many come with fewer keys to be more portable. If your keyboard has less than 88 keys, don't fret - just make sure it has at least 49 keys. [Click here for my piano and keyboard recommendations.](#)

**2 – You need a sustain pedal.** Standard pianos have three pedals. The sustain pedal is always the one furthest to the right. For most keyboards, you will need to purchase a sustain pedal separately. I'm not going to show you in this sample workbook how to use the pedal, but we go over it in detail in my full program. [Purchase a pedal here.](#)

# INTRODUCTION

## Four Stages of Learning and How to Practice

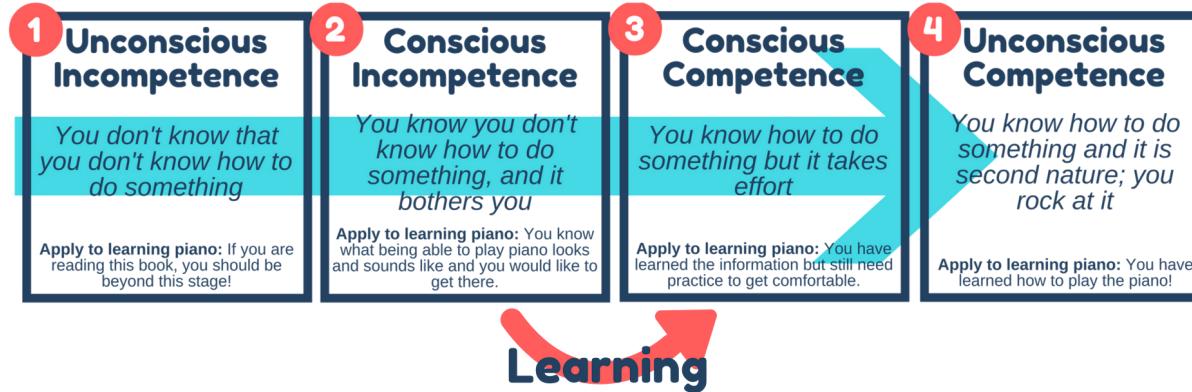
When you learn anything new, there are four natural stages you progress through before you "know" that new thing. Those four stages and a brief explanation of each are shown in the following figure:



The good news is that because you are going through this book, you're already on Stage 2 of this process. You already know what a piano is, and you know that you would like to be able to play the piano. But currently either you can't play piano or can't play it the way you would like. That's Stage 2 in the 4 stages of learning.

# INTRODUCTION

To progress from Stage 2 to Stage 3, you need to acquire knowledge. For piano, that's going through this book and learning the concepts I explain here.



Then, to progress from Stage 3 to Stage 4, you need to practice. Practice is how these concepts become second nature to you.



# INTRODUCTION

I recommend you apply these stages concept-by-concept. In other words, make sure you progress through the stages one concept at a time. For example, on Day 1 of this course, we're going to learn the white keys. After Day 1, finding all seven white keys should be second nature for you.

If you've taken some piano lessons in the past, you'll need to be careful: even if you can find the G-key by starting at the C-key, that doesn't mean you know the keys. You have to know the G-key for what it is: the second white key in front of any group of three black keys.

Let's compare this to how you think about the days of the week. If I asked you to tell me about Wednesday, you wouldn't start on Sunday or Monday and count until you got to Wednesday, would you? No.

You know immediately that Wednesday is the middle weekday. It falls after Tuesday and before Thursday. Each concept you learn in this book should become second nature for you much like the days of the week already are.

And while we're on the topic of learning the keys, don't even THINK about putting those silly stickers on your keys to "help" you learn them. There are only 12 keys to learn. Put on your big boy or girl pants and learn the keys, okay? If you can remember the days of the week and the months of the year, you can do this too.

Speaking of learning the keys, let's get started with Day 1...

# DAY 1: WHITE KEYS

## Why There Are Two Kinds of Keys (Black & White)

If you don't know how to play the piano, looking at one can be intimidating. There are white keys. There are black keys. Some black keys are in groups of two. Some black keys are in groups of three.

The first thing I want to do is simplify the way you think about the keys on the piano. There is no difference between a black and a white key other than the way they look. They do exactly the same thing, and every key is the same distance apart musically. The main reason we have both black and white keys today is so we can tell where we are on the keyboard at any given time.

As I mentioned in the introduction, a standard piano has 88 keys. If you have a keyboard, you may have fewer than that, but for the sake of this book, I'm going to use the standard number of 88 keys. Of these, 52 keys are white and 36 are black.

Because there is no difference between a white and black key musically, the piano could be 88 identical purple keys. But then how would you know where you were on the piano and what notes you were playing at any given time? The black and white keys are purposely designed to tell you where you are and which notes you are playing.

# DAY 1

## Learning the Names of the White Keys

You only have seven white keys to learn before the names start repeating themselves. The C key is the most recognizable key on the keyboard, so we will start there.

Look at your keyboard. All across it you have black keys grouped in twos and threes. The white note to the left of any pair of black keys is a C key.



As you continue to the right from the C key, focusing only on the white keys, you continue along the alphabet. Then, after G, the alphabet begins again at A.



# DAY 1

So for Day 1, your job is to learn the names of the white keys. You need to really internalize them and master them like I discussed in the introduction of this book.

Remember, just because you can find the A key by starting at C doesn't mean you really know where A is. You should get to the point where you can go straight to the A key without even thinking about C. The one and only practice session for today will help you get there.

## Fingering

At this point, the best way to play the individual white keys is with your thumb on your right hand. As you practice playing the white keys, and as you go through the practice session below, try to use your right-hand thumb. This will make some techniques in future lessons easier for you.

## Practice Session 1.1

The practice session for today is to play a white key, at random, on command. You can make flash cards on your own, use a flashcards app, or use tools for this practice session at <https://5DayPianoBook.com/White-Keys-Practice>.

At the link, you'll find printable flash cards, as well as an audio exercise where I call out the name of a white key. The goal is for you to play that white key before I call out the next one. My pace for calling out the keys gets faster and faster. If you can keep up at the end of that audio exercise, you're ready for Day 2!

# DAY 2: MAJOR CHORDS

If you're reading this, you should be a downright master at the white keys - because today we're going to start playing multiple white keys at the same time. **Playing multiple notes at the same time is known as playing a chord.** There are many different types of chords but the most popular chords are the "Major" chords, which we'll start to go over today.

## Introduction to Major Chords

Today we are going to learn three major chords: C-Major, F-Major, and G-Major.

A **C-Major chord** is played by pressing the C-key, E-key, and G-key at the same time, like this:



# DAY 2

Here is an **F-Major chord**:



And here is a **G-Major chord**:



# DAY 2

## Chord Fingering

Many beginners like to play chords using their thumb, middle-finger, and pinky, like in the images on the previous page.

Another option that many like is the thumb, pointer-finger, and ring-finger combination.



The most advanced method is to play chords with the thumb, pointer-finger, and middle-finger. This method will allow you to be more versatile in the way you play in the future.



# DAY 2

Experiment with the three finger positions to figure out what is going to work best for you.

## Practice Session 2.1

Play every C-Major chord you can find on your piano or keyboard. Repeat this over and over to build the muscle memory of your finger positions and to feel (and hear!) what it's like to play three notes at one time. Before moving on, you should be able to continually do this for at least one minute without making any mistakes.

## Practice Session 2.2

Repeat Practice Session 2.1 but with F-Major chords.

## Practice Session 2.3

Repeat Practice Session 2.2 but with G-Major chords.

# DAY 2

## The Formula for All Major Chords

The lesson I'm most known for as a piano teacher is teaching people how simple chords can be. If you ask a professional musician to explain what a chord is and how to play it, your head could explode from the explanation. But this isn't rocket science!

You don't need to memorize every chord, because both major and minor chords have a simple formula. I'll share the trick for major chords first:

**The formula for major chords is 4-3.**

Notice that to play a C-Major chord, you start at the C-key, go to the right by 4 more keys (including both white and black), then go to the right by 3 more keys. You'll see that you're playing the C-E-G combination that makes up a C-Major chord.

For now, I want you to practice C-Major, F-Major, and G-Major, but I also want you to understand how these chords are formulated. We'll get into the rest of the major chords in Day 10.

# DAY 3: MINOR CHORDS

The second most popular type of chord is called a “minor” chord. Minor chords sound much more sad or dark than major chords. Even though they are the “sad” sounding chord, minor chords can give songs a nice element of emotion.

## Introduction to Minor Chords

Today we are going to learn three minor chords: A-Minor, D-Minor, and E-Minor.

An **A-Minor chord** is played by pressing the A-key, C-key, and E-key at the same time, like this:



# DAY 3

Here is a **D-Minor chord**:



And here is an **E-Minor chord**:



# DAY 3

## Practice Session 3.1

Play every A-Minor chord you can find on your piano or keyboard. Repeat this over and over to build the muscle memory of your finger position and to feel (and hear!) what it's like to play three notes at one time. Before moving on, you should be able to continually do this for at least one minute without making any mistakes.

## Practice Session 3.2

Repeat Practice Session 3.1 but with D-Minor chords.

## Practice Session 3.3

Repeat Practice Session 3.2 but with E-Minor chords.

## The Formula for All Minor Chords

For minor chords you just reverse the major chord formula.

**The formula for minor chords is 3-4.**

# DAY 3

## A Tip for Building Muscle Memory

If you are a beginner to the piano, then putting your hand and fingers in the correct position to play chords may be uncomfortable at first. With practice, I can assure you that you will get better - it will become more and more comfortable for you to find and play different keys and chords.

To help you get there faster, though, I want to share with you some interesting results from a documentary I watched recently. In the documentary, researchers discussed an experiment where they asked five people who had never played piano to play a simple pattern on the piano. The people practiced this simple pattern over the course of five days while the researchers analyzed their brain patterns throughout the process.

A second group of five people were asked to visualize the exercise for five days, rather than physically playing the piano. The results were incredible. Researchers showed that **the two groups measured exactly the same brain activity and brain growth.**

Here's my takeaway from this experiment: even when you aren't physically at your piano, you can still "practice" your chords and other concepts by going through them in your mind. Pretty cool, huh?

# DAY 4: LEFT HAND

So far, everything we have done has been with the right hand. Today, I am going to show you how to start adding the left hand to what you have already learned. Many people struggle with coordinating the left and right hand, so we are going to start slowly.

## Adding the Left Hand

The first thing you need to do is stretch out your left hand as wide as it can go, then put it down on the keyboard. See if you can play a C-key with your left-hand pinky and the next C-key to the right with your left-hand thumb. Like this:



## DAY 4

Play those two C-keys at the same time over and over again, and check whether your hand is big enough to be able to play them without accidentally pressing any other notes. If you can, great! That's how we're going to play the left hand for now.

If your hand is not big enough, then you will need to make a slight modification. When I say play two C-keys in your left hand, play one = choose whichever finger is most comfortable for you.

To add the left hand to what we've already accomplished, let's take the C-Major chord first. Play the three keys with the right hand and at the same time, play the two C-keys in your left hand. Your hands should look like this:



## DAY 4

Next, try adding the left hand to the F-Major chord. With your right hand, play the same F-Major chord we learned on Day 4; with your left hand, play two F-keys.



Then, try it with a G-Major chord.



# DAY 4

For now, your left hand is going to do this basic motion while we build on what your right hand does in the next several days. Eventually, we'll learn more advanced moves that you can do with your left hand.

## Practice Session 4.1

Repeat Practice Session 2.1 (C-Major chord) but add the left hand.

## Practice Session 4.2

Repeat Practice Session 2.2 (F-Major chord) but add the left hand.

## Practice Session 4.3

Repeat Practice Session 2.3 (G-Major chord) but add the left hand.

## Practice Session 4.4

Repeat Practice Session 3.1 (A-Minor chord) but add the left hand.

## Practice Session 4.5

Repeat Practice Session 3.2 (D-Minor chord) but add the left hand.

## Practice Session 4.6

Repeat Practice Session 3.3 (E-Minor chord) but add the left hand.

# DAY 4

## The Role of Each Hand

At this point, you may be wondering why we play the chords with the right hand and not with the left hand. It's because of the way the piano sounds.

Go ahead and try to play a chord with your left hand, toward the left side of your keyboard. It doesn't sound good, does it? The left hand is best for adding deep bass notes to our song, and the right hand is for playing the prettier chords and melodies.

## Hand Placement on the Keyboard

The notes on the keyboard repeat themselves over and over again across the entire instrument, so how do you know which specific chord to play at any given time? For example, if I ask you to play an E-Minor chord, and you know there are several E-Minor chords on the piano, how do you know which one to play?

The general rule is to spend most of your time in the middle of the keyboard. The center-most key on the piano is a C-key and is referred to as "Middle-C." For now, try to keep your right hand on or to the right of Middle-C and keep your left hand to the left of Middle-C.

## DAY 4

Here are some examples of where your hands would go on certain chords on a full 88-key keyboard or piano:



# DAY 5: 36 SONGS

In just four days, you have learned all the white keys and six of the most popular chords. Now you can start putting some of this knowledge together to play songs.

## Chord Progressions

The term "chord progression" is a fancy way of saying a pattern or sequence of chords. For example, if I asked you to play a C-Major chord, then an A-Minor chord, then a G-Major chord, that would be a C-Major, A-Minor, G-Major chord progression.

Every song has its own chord progression. And there is one in particular that is extremely popular...

## A Popular Chord Progression

An Australian band called "Axis of Awesome" figured out that there's a huge list of popular songs which all use exactly the same chord progression. The band made a video where they play that same chord progression over and over again, while singing the various songs.

**Parents: Please Note That the Following Video Contains Several Instances of Profanity.**  
Check out the video now: <https://5DayPianoBook.com/4-Chord-Song>

# DAY 5

Now that you've watched the video, hopefully you see just how powerful chords can be. With the same four chords, the featured band was able to play over 36 super-popular songs. I'll share with you what those four chords are so you can begin to do the same. The chords are C-Major, G-Major, A-Minor, and F-major.

## Practice Session 5.1

Play the C-Major, G-Major, A-Minor, and F-Major chord progression over and over until you start getting comfortable changing from each chord to the next.

## A Winning Posture

It's important for you to play in the way that's most comfortable for you. For example, I much prefer to play standing rather than sitting - but that's a personal preference. There are a few guidelines to keep in mind that will help you going forward:

- Keep your elbows level with or above the keys. If your elbows are below the keys (which is how I see many beginners play), then you will just be using your fingertip to play - and that can cause you to have less control and tire more easily.
- Keep your back straight (not slumped over).
- Relax. Many beginners are tense when they play.

Keep those three tips in mind as you find your winning posture.

# NEXT STEPS

Congratulations on making it through my sample workbook! I hope by now you see how easy it can be to learn how to play the piano.

If you are ready to continue learning piano with this method, then be on the lookout for the newest version of my full 21-day program. The full program is everything you need to be playing songs like I do in my videos and I'm even working on a brand new melody & ear training bonus course to show you how to take this to the next level and actually play the melody on the piano. To date, 2,200+ successful students have learned to play the piano with this program. Will you be next?

For a behind-the-scenes update on the status of my full program, just click the following link: [\*\*https://5DayPianoBook.com/Next-Steps\*\*](https://5DayPianoBook.com/Next-Steps)

Happy playing,

**JACQUES HOPKINS**

