

Piano Playing Docs | Methods

JJ van Zon, 2021

Piano Motion Symbols

Introduction

This is an idea for a notation for that might extend fingering notation from just numbers to additional symbols, indicating how the hands and body might move.

I hope this might help create awareness of the body and help with piano technique.













Piano playing may involve:

- move, stretch, turn, press, stress or stationary
- fingers, wrist, arm and torso
- in x, y or z directions.

Not all body parts or motions seem equally involved.

These symbols aim to be a quite literal representation of body and motion, while still schematic and hopefully not ambiguous.


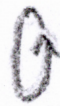
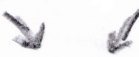


Basic Elements

	Finger		Move		Press
	Fingers		Stretch		Loose
	Wrist		Turn		Tight
	Torso / arms		Stationary		Slightly (braces)

Three Dimensions

















Depicting things in 3 dimensions, the symbols may be like looking down at the hands in a sort of perspective projection. To represent depth, diagonal lines might be used. Here is how some things might work in 3 dimensions:

	Move left / right		Turn facing you
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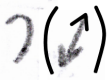


	Move towards black / white keys		Turn forward / backward
	Move into keys		Turn side to side
	Move towards face		

Nuance



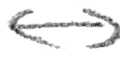
Nuance, like press *a little* or move *a lot*, may be written down like this:







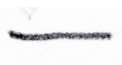

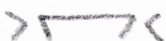



	Restfully	Slightly	Normally	Exaggerated
Press				
Move				
Tight Wrist				
Loose Wrist				

Finger Enunciation






	Move fingers restfully
	Move fingers slightly
	Move fingers normally
	Move fingers exaggerated

Tension & Release

	Reach sideways	Then let go, move hand back.
	Reach sideways	Then let go, move hand back.
	Stretch	Stretching fingers wider. But trying to release soon.

	Reach black keys	If arpeggiated, might prefer crossing over instead.
	Reach white keys	If arpeggiated, might prefer crossing over instead.
	Stretch diagonally	Composite of stretch sideways and reach for black keys.
	Finger move into keys	Pressure coming out of the fingers.
	Wrist move into keys	Pressure coming out of the wrist.
	Arm move into key	Pressure coming out of the arm.
	Hand resting on keys	
	Hand resting on lap	
	Pronounced wrist tight	
	Curved wrist loose	
	Curved wrist stationary	
	Pronounced wrist pressed	

Jumps

	Hand upward (right)	
	Hand upward (left)	
	Gravity assist (right)	Falling into key with gravity.
	Gravity assist (left)	Falling into key with gravity.
	Bow jump (sideways)	



Controlled
jump
(sideways)

Though grace might desire a bowy move, a jump may be rather big, and might need some control, so perhaps move towards first, then press.

Cross Over

May feel semi-smooth.

	Cross over (large)		Thumb under finger / right hand		With wrist turn (thumb under finger / right hand)
	Cross over (small)		Finger over thumb / right hand		With wrist turn (finger over thumb / right hand)
			Thumb under finger / left hand		With wrist turn (thumb under finger / left hand)
			Finger over thumb / left hand		With wrist turn (finger over thumb / left hand)

Fingers


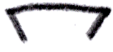






A specific amount of fingers might displayed.

This might be used to say something specific about a finger in terms of motion, tension or otherwise.





There are 3 flavors here: flat fingers, pronounced fingers and high / curved fingers.

	Flat Fingers	Pronounced Fingers	Curved / High Fingers
1 Finger (Right)			
1 Finger (Left)			
2 Fingers			
3 Fingers			
4 Fingers			
5 Fingers			
1 5	Switch finger (in place)	Part of existing fingering notation.	
	Switch finger (at different times)	At different times same key with different fingers.	













Wrist

	With flat fingers		Pronounced		Curved		High
	Tilted (flat fingers)		Tilted (pronounced)		Tilted (curved)		Tilted (high)













Wrist Stationary

	Stationary (left-right)		Stationary (towards black / white keys)		Stationary (into keys / towards face)		Stationary (composite)
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Wrist Move

	Wrist move (left / variation 1)		Wrist move (right / variation 1)		Wrist move (right and left / variation 1)
	Wrist move (left / variation 2)		Wrist move (right / variation 2)		Wrist move (right and left / variation 2)
	Wrist move (into keys)		Wrist move (into keys or towards face)		Wrist move (towards face)
	Wrist Move (towards black keys)		Wrist move (towards white keys)		Wrist move (towards black and white keys)

These wrist *moves* may the same as wrist *turning*:

	Wrist move (into keys / left)		Wrist move (towards face / left)		Wrist move (into keys or towards face / left)
	Wrist move (into keys / right)		Wrist move (towards face / right)		Wrist move (into keys or towards face / right)
	Wrist Move (towards black keys / right)		Wrist move (towards white keys / right)		Wrist move (towards black and white keys / right)
	Wrist Move (towards black keys / left)		Wrist move (towards white keys / left)		Wrist move (towards black and white keys / left)

A composite, to show some flexibility:



Wrist move (composite)

Wrist Press

Is usually downward, not likely in any other direction.



Wrist press (variation 1)



Wrist press (variation 2)



Wrist press (right)



Wrist press (left)

Wrist Turn



Wrist turn (right) /
'pivot'



Wrist turn (left) /
'pivot'



wrist turn (right and left) /
'pivot'



Wrist turn forward
(right) / flap



Wrist turn forward
(left) / flap

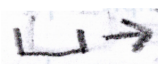


wrist turn (facing you /
right)

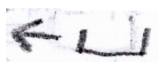
Torso



Torso (+ arms)



Torso sway (right)



Torso sway (left)



Torso tilt forward



Torso tilt backward



Torso turn sideways (back and legs)


Arm




Arm outward (left)



Arm inward (left)




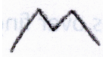





 Arm placing torso in front of right hand

Elbow


 Elbow sideways

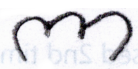
Some Fingers Deeper In Keys


3 fingers:

	Flat Fingers	Pronounced Fingers	Curved Fingers
Mid finger			
Outer fingers			
Right finger			

4 fingers:


 Flat / outer fingers deeper in keys


 Curved / outer fingers deeper in keys


 Curved / 3rd finger deeper in keys

Composites

To demonstrate some possibilities for flexibility.

 Fall in and then raise out of key

 3 fingers: flat, pronounced and curved

 Curved wrist flapping, mid finger pressed



Curved wrist hopping. 1st and last note pressed. Middle note moved towards black keys, pressed with 3rd finger.