



**creative piano**  
a c a d e m y

## **Guide Sheet**

The Top 5 Piano Exercises For  
Beginners  
+ More...



Wattsup guys!

Josef Sykora here and welcome to this accompanying guide to the 'Top 5 Piano Exercises For Beginners' Video.

Good to have you here and to see all your smiling, eager faces...

Lets go.

First - Heres the accompanying video, just incase you've stumbled across this guide and not actually seen the video.



<https://youtu.be/tQh3-WBzaKY>

The purpose of this guide is to give you the notation for all the exercises in the video so you can follow along from the sheet music (If that's your thing!).

But also to expand on the exercises and go into a few extra morsels of piano goodness to get the creative juices flowing and ensure you get the most out of these exercises.

To get the most out of this guide, follow along with the video.



**A quick note about piano practice. Specifically, 3 practical and actionable principles you can apply to your practice to get way more out of your exercises and time.**

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I go into a lot of detail about effective piano practice and how to structure your practice inside my premium piano course - 'Creative Practice Routines'. Go here for loads more detail - <https://members.creativepianoacademy.com/cpr>

But if you follow these 3 principles below, you're well on your way to getting more out of your practice.

- **Focus** - focused practice is better than unfocused practice. '*Duh*' I hear you say.

Well, as obvious as it sounds, its harder than you may think especially when we are expelling energy and concentrating that energy into a new endeavour and learning new skills.

The bodies primary purpose is to conserve energy and so will make this very difficult. So no thinking "what's for tea", or "what can I watch on netlix". When you're practicing, be present, be focused and get the job done. 10 minutes of focused practice is worth an hour of unfocused 'going through the motions'.

- **Push your comfort zone** - Adaptation occurs at the extreme. In order to embody new skills effectively, you need to put your body / mind under enough stress / pressure.

There's a point when practicing specific exercises where you think you've hit the limit. At this point, try to push it a little bit further. Stop when it really hurts. Know that balance between just pushing your comfort zone and serious discomfort. Don't let the pendulum swing the other way.

- **Switch things up** - Time and time again I get asked on U-Toob 'how long should I spend on this exercise or that pattern before moving on'. I get it, we're wired to want an instruction manual and stick to it step-by-step and hope a result is at the end. The truth is far more nuanced.



The skills you learn compliment each other. It's not a binary process. You know, learn this one exercise and that's it. No, everything you learn feeds into a global skill set. So its far better to practice a wider range of exercises and skills and watch them all compliment each other as you grow as a pianist, than hunker down on one exercise and get obsessed with it. Seriously. Switch it up, you'll get better quicker and get more variety into your practice to boot!

Now I could talk about the importance of route maps, personal piano goals and using a solid piano practice framework but we would be here all day. Way more info on this inside 'creative practice routines'. Hop on over to <https://members.creativepianoacademy.com/cpr> for more info.

Anyway, results will vary for you, but try and keep the above 3 points in mind.

Now, on with the show.

### Exercise 1

Whenever someone comes to me as a complete beginner, this is the exact exercise I show them. Sit at the piano, get into position, feel the keys, hear how they sound and start getting familiar with your new environment.

Its based on moving the fingers whilst in one static position from the C to the G and back down again to the C. From this we get a few different exercises.

### Exercise 1 - Fingers The Same

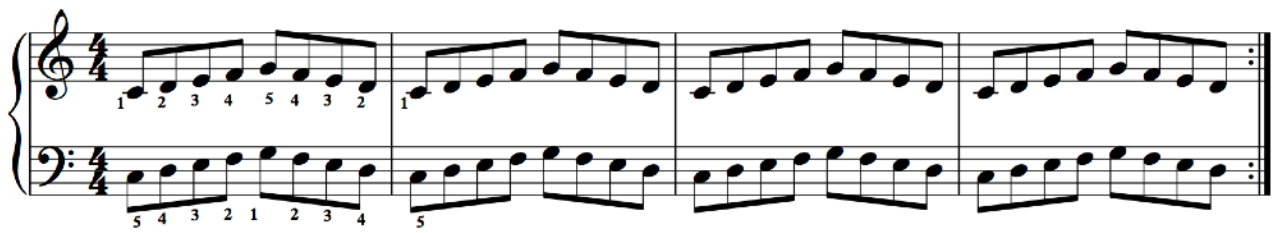


Think of this in various stages. Start with just the right hand, then just the left hand. Don't stress and settle into it.

When you are ready, put your hands together. The easier option is to keep the fingers the same. This eliminates hand coordination (which is whole different skill to develop) but I'd recommend starting with this. Then move on to...



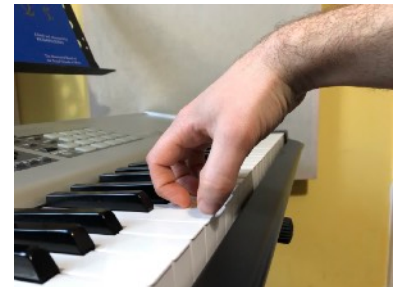
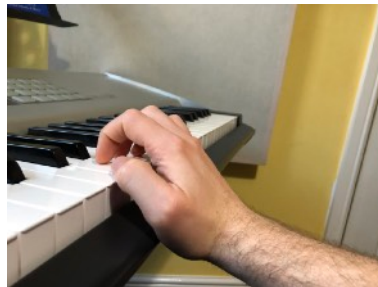
## Exercise 1 - Notes The Same



Here we are keeping the notes the same in both hands. This means we use different fingers and it's slightly more demanding.

Either way, whilst its not the most exciting exercise, its perfect for your new home at that piano and getting settled in.

TIP: Don't let your fingers collapse. Keep a good rounded structure and try to keep your wrists up. Look at the images below. The left image is the correct position. The middle and right images are common mistakes I see my beginners make all the time.



Also, be mindful of fingers 3 4 and 5. These are your weak fingers and they might cause you some frustration in the early days. You could isolate these for short bursts to give them some attention.

## Exercise 2

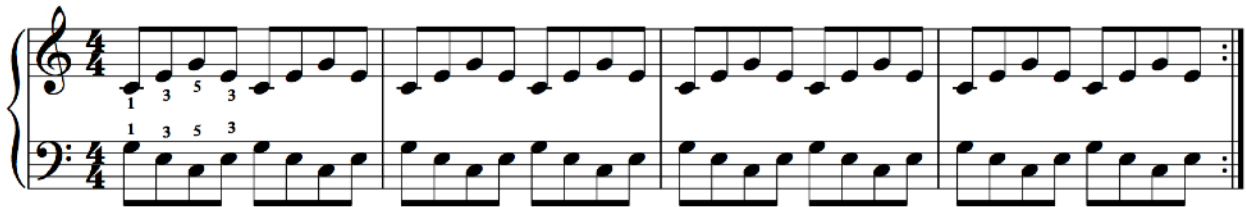
Now lets go a layer deeper. This is a very similar exercise but we are going to miss the 2nd and 4th note to get what we call an 'arpeggio' pattern. Arpeggio simply meaning broken chord. Don't worry, in exercise 3 you will play your very first chord.

So here we want to move up and down the 'C' , 'E' and 'G' notes in a repeat sequence very much like exercise 1.



Again, you want to start off with hands separately and then both hands together first keeping your fingers the same then the notes the same.

### Exercise 2 - Fingers The Same



### Exercise 2 - Notes The Same



Try to keep it smooth at a steady speed without sudden jerks. This will build control.

So, this isn't in the video but to take this exercise further (once you've got used to the previous exercise, get your little finger onto the 'C' note above your bottom 'C' note. This makes an octave. Its a bit of a stretch but the following exercise can be quite addictive and melodic so give it a go.

### Exercise 2 - Going Further





What we want to do here is cycle between the 'C', 'E', 'G', and top 'C' then back down again using fingers 1, 2, 3 and 5 respectively. Then for the next bar, switch to the 'F' instead of the 'E'. This creates a nice little chord change especially when you add in the left hand.

Too advanced - don't worry, keep plugging away at the other exercise and you'll get there. This exercise is taken directly from another video I have on youtube so if you want to see it in action... 'arpeggio' your way over here - <https://youtu.be/0PHtMZF9Xrw>

### Exercise 3

Boom! How we doing? Still with me?...

This next exercise is relatively straight forward. Get your fingers (right hand) into exactly the same position as in exercise 1 and 2. That's the thumb on the 'C', little finger on the 'G'.

To play our first chord we are going to press fingers 1, 3 and 5 down but not fingers 2 and 4. This means we should hear the 'C', 'E' and 'G' played together. This is a 'C Major Chord'.

Stab away at that chord whilst trying to keep that pesky 4th finger out of the way.

### Exercise 3 - Our First Chord



This might take a bit of getting used to, but stick with it. If you catch that 4th finger playing the F, one of the more advanced ways we deal with it is to keep structure in fingers 1, 3 and 5, but keep the 4th relaxed. This makes it more pliable and easier to hold up.



I had a student who had a real problem with this. His 4th finger just wouldn't do what he wanted. He also couldn't keep the arch and structure in the finger. It used to collapse. It took him a few weeks of continued practice, but he got there. Slowly developing the muscle and position over time is key.

Again don't stress over it, try it then head back to exercise 1 to develop your finger strength.

When you're ready, you can also play a 'C' in the left hand along with the chord and move both hands together. We call this a 'bass' note.

### Exercise 3 - A Bit Extra



Going further, you can move the bass note between the C for 4 strikes and the A for 4 strikes. This creates a nice bit of harmony between the 2 chords for very little 'work' so to speak.

Now we're getting somewhere and we're getting something that sounds more and more like actual music.

Good, well done... now move on.

### Exercise 4 - Our First Chord Progression.

Now we've got used to playing our first chord. The next task is to take that position and start moving it around.

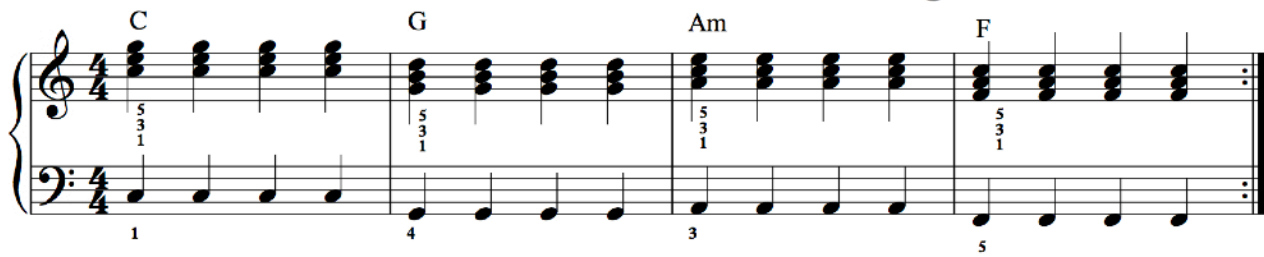
Here's the good news - If you can manage that previous C Major Chord, all we need to do is keep the right hand fingers the same width apart and just move its position.

If you can read music and watched the video, you might notice something. I've written this chord sequence out an octave higher than I played it purely because its





## Exercise 4 - Our First Chord Progression



far easier to read. So yes its technically wrong... but its easier so I make no apologies ;)

The mechanics of this exercise is straight forward even if its not straightforward to play.

Get into your C major position, then simple move your hand (keeping the finger width the same) so that your thumb is on the G , 3rd on the B, 5th on the D. Then the Thumb on the A, 3rd on the C, 5th on the E and finally, thumb on the F, 3rd on the A, and the 5th on the C. Those are out 4 positions.

Incidentally, if you're struggling with the names of the notes and where they are on the piano, check out my video on this right here - <https://youtu.be/9hMFQzXK77E>

Of course when you're ready, bring in that left hand and see if you can keep both hands moving through this chord progression.

*Interesting side note - This chord progression is the classic 'pop' chord progression. Its used in countless songs across the decades.*

## Exercise 5 - Timing and Hand Coordination

So you can now play your first chord progression. But it sounds a little well, mechanical right... We're just pounding away at the chords with both hands.

So lets bring in a little technique to separate the hands out and start building up our hand coordination skills.



For the first exercise exercise (the one in the video) all we need to do is separate our hands so that instead of bringing them down together, we play Left, Right, Left Right. Bring in all the other chords, bobs your uncle.

## Exercise 5 - Timing and Hand Coordination



**Whats not in the video however...** is how you can take these 4 chords and put them in a few different orders to get different chord progressions and different sounds. We all like a bit of variety right?

So instead of sticking to 'C', 'G', 'Am', 'F' try switching those chords around. Below are some examples.

## Exercise 5 - Timing and Hand Coordination (2)



## Exercise 5 - Timing and Hand Coordination (3)



And of course you can experiment with others.

So thats the top 5 exercises for beginners. There are lots and lots of exercises we could be doing, but these five will give you a good head start.



## Now here's a bonus for ya...

Remember earlier I was talking a little bit about my premium 'mini' course 'Creative Practice Routines'? (<https://members.creativepianoacademy.com/cpr>)

Well, here's a little sneak peak into something I explore in one of the bonus lessons included with the course.

Remember in exercise 1 we put our right hand into the C major position (thumb on C, pinky on G) and we ran up and down those notes...

Well, a nice little way of coming up with melodic patterns whilst also training and developing those fingers is by selecting 8 of those notes at random, learning that sequence and playing it over and over again.

For example, our notes to choose from are C D E F and G.

So, lets create an 8 note sequence and choose any of the above notes.

E.g. - C E F D G F D E

Try playing this in a smooth continuous pattern. Its quite challenging as our fingers aren't used to this strange new order.

These are fantastic for finger coordination, connecting the brain to the fingers... good for the musical ear because sometimes they just won't sound very good. Other times they sound awesome.

So try a load of these, get creative, try them and simply throw them away. You might even get so good you can create them on the fly.

Its these kind of exercises where YOU have the power. You're in control that I like. They are melodic, get that brain going and develop you as a musician. And if you really mine this principle, you can get hours, days, even weeks of solid practice out of it.

Here's some more to try



## Creating Your Own Finger Exercises (1)



## Creating Your Own Finger Exercises (2)



## Creating Your Own Finger Exercises (3)



I'm being sneaky... Notice this last exercise lasts for 16 notes? It even includes a finger roll...

This is just a little hint at how you can expand on this principle and start creating way more complex, melodically intricate patterns. But don't get stressed out. Keep going through these exercises slowly but surely and you'll start to see improvement.

Be realistic and don't be too hard on yourself.



***Where do I go from here? - videos and resources from this guide sheet and more...***

**Further Videos**

- The 'Piano Lessons for Beginners' Youtube Playlist - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhmvEMFe19DsCFuu9IW4gDDlad3gAeZR7>

This is a huge playlist of my piano lessons which I consider perfect to move on to after spending some time on these beginner exercises.

If you want to start getting melodic and playing some real music (even if you've just started) I thoroughly recommend you try...

- '3 Essential Right Hand Patterns for Piano' - [https://youtu.be/Fn\\_xCTDCRiU](https://youtu.be/Fn_xCTDCRiU)
- 'An Inspiring Beginner Friendly Piano Pattern' - <https://youtu.be/v0Y6wVEKgDs>

This last one by the way is an example of creating your own finger exercises.

**Resources**

- The Best Adult Piano Practice Plan - <https://creativepianoacademy.com/the-best-adult-piano-practice-plan>

If you haven't grabbed this video yet, do! It will transform your piano practice.

- Creative Practice Routines (premium course) - [members.creativepianoacademy.com/cpr](https://members.creativepianoacademy.com/cpr)

Want to improve your piano practice, follow your own route maps based on your piano goals... Check out the page above and see if the course is a fit.

*Hope you enjoyed this guide sheet. Get inspired, get creative and most importantly*  
**Have Fun!**

**- Josef Sykora**