

## Title:

12 Ways Pianists Can Get Better Results With Less Effort

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602

## Summary:

Steve, a high school student, runs track, plays the sax in the band, takes 3 honors classes, works 10 hours a week and still continues to improve his piano playing. How does he do it?

He uses the 80/20 principle.

Nancy is married, works full time, goes to the gym 5 days a week and maintains a busy social life. Yet she keeps expanding her repertoire as her piano technique develops. What's her secret? She uses the 80/20 principle.

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## Keywords:

piano, lessons, practice, music

## Article Body:

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Nancy is married, works full time, goes to the gym 5 days a week and maintains a busy social life. Yet she keeps expanding her repertoire as her piano technique develops. What's her secret? She uses the 80/20 principle.

Isn't it time you followed the example of these successful piano students?

In his best selling book, *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Success by Achieving More with Less*, Richard Koch shows that there is a faster and easier way to get great results in all areas of life.

Koch is one of many authors who use the theory called the Pareto Principle (discovered by Italian economist Vifredo Pareto in 1897) to demonstrate how 80% of your results come from 20% of your effort.

Here are 12 ways you can use the 80/20 principle to achieve better results with

less effort.

1. Practice 10 - 15 minutes every day instead of 2 hours once a week.
2. Learn 4 measures of a piece very well rather than playing the entire song poorly.
3. Plan the music for each of your practice sessions in advance.
4. Practice one scale per day using correct technique, fingering and timing instead of racing through all 12 scales daily.
5. Learn how to form one chord of each type (major 7th, 6th, diminished, etc.) as an alternative to memorizing a catalog of chords.
6. Put all of your repertoire pieces into a loose-leaf notebook rather than relying on place marks in your piano books. For help with this see my article:

How to Increase Your Return on Investment By Organizing Your Music

7. Listen to recordings of your special selection rather than expecting all of your inspiration to come from your own playing.
8. Pick one accompaniment pattern for the verses of a song and one for the bridge as opposed to creating specific left hand parts for each measure.
9. Memorize five songs which you can play anywhere at any time instead of using music to play 25 songs. For help with this see my article:  
How to Memorize a Song the Easy Way

10. Create a repeating motive (short melodic figure) and use this to improvise on a 12 bar blues as an alternative to randomly playing the blues scale.

11. Arrange a song in advance by setting up patterns of ii-V-I progressions as opposed to simply following the chords as printed in a Fake Book. For help with this see my free lesson:  
How to Arrange a Song in 12 Easy Steps

12. Set up low pressure performance opportunities (play for friends, family, fellow students, etc.) at regular intervals so that you have time-specific goals for bringing your pieces up to performance level.

Action Exercises

Here are three things you can do immediately to put these ideas into action.

First, pick one or two of the 12 ways listed above that fits with your personality, style and level. Start using these in your practicing right away.

Second, begin every practice session with your most important piece. Exception: if this selection requires that you warm up with scales or exercises, do these first.

Third, monitor your progress by recording yourself today and then a month from now.

Once you hear the difference in your piano playing, you'll see clearly that your results have come from focusing on the most important areas of your practicing.

Start using the 80/20 principle today and you'll be amazed at how quickly you'll get better results from your piano practicing with less effort!

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