

The Piano Post



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How Often Should I Tune My Piano?

I have had quite a few calls from families doing Zoom piano lessons, and also from the teachers themselves, asking for piano tuning. Apparently, when they teach on Zoom, the teachers get a chance to see and hear what their students are playing on 😬. Imagine that. As fall is often a time for children and adults to take up piano as school starts and families become new piano owners, I thought it might be a good time to revisit the question: how often should I tune my piano?

The Piano Technician's Guild Website, ptg.org, has good answers for many FAQ piano questions. It states, as a basic rule, "Keep your piano in tune. It was specifically designed to be tuned to the international pitch standard of A-440 cycles per second. Your piano will sound its best and give you and your family the most pleasure when it is tuned regularly and kept in proper playing condition." The how often part depends on several factors: 1. the changes in humidity which affect primarily the wood soundboard, but also the bridges; 2. how much use the piano is getting and how heavily it is used. An hour of beginning piano music will not affect the piano as much as an hour of Liszt;



Pleasant Distractions Part II

In the last newsletter, I mentioned some podcasts that I have found interesting and entertaining. I would like to add *Song Exploder* by Hrishikesh Hirway. These are short episodes about how artists put their songs together. Most of the songs are pop songs, but check out Dec. 2018 with Yo Yo Ma. And check these on YouTube:

From the Lone Star Wind Orchestra Horns:

https://youtu.be/_v3hFJ0IDiY

A Minnesota Doxology:

https://youtu.be/Jm_IP_Zeb2o

The Seattle Symphony Bassoons:

<https://youtu.be/tt6NRqGEZFA>

The Covid Cello Project :

<https://youtu.be/0ly61HpQ3mU>

And a fun take on Uptown Funk:

<https://youtu.be/M1F0IBnsnkE>

And Westerville Civic Sym.:

<https://westervillesymphony.org>

And take a tour of the Steinway factory: www.steinway.com/misc/virtual-factory-tour.

3. Moving the piano. Note: moving the piano will affect the tuning somewhat, a lot depends on how long a move, temperature differences from point A to point B, and how often (that being said, the piano will be more stable if left in the same place). Typically, the changes may be noticeable, but not drastic. A move will not make a piano 1/2 step flat, but not tuning it for 20 years may do that.

My instructor, Doug Neal, at the tech college where I learned piano service, Western Iowa Tech, told us that some people will tune their piano every 20 years, whether it needs it or not. At the time, we thought that was *hilarious*...but now I know he wasn't joking.

And if you might think, maybe I'll learn to do it myself... well let's just say there is a lot more to tuning the piano than just buying the tools, which, unless you know what to get, may not even get you started. Here is a photo I took of a "kit" a customer got from Amazon. Compare the size of the kit tuning lever with mine.



When considering how often to tune or whether to tune the piano, cost can certainly be a consideration. The care of your piano is worthy of a spot in your yearly budget plans. And if you think I'm comparing the piano to essentials, well I understand that getting the plumbing fixed is probably a bigger priority than tuning the piano and you cannot drive your piano to work. But I also know how much I spend on internet, cable and my smart phone, just to name a few things, and I pay this every month, not just once or twice a year. I also know that playing music is great relaxation and great for your brain! If you can, consider making the piano a budget item. As an old Piano Technician's Guild bumper sticker used to say, "Love thy neighbor, Tune thy piano."

Some Updates

Well, I first want to apologize for missing my Winter edition of the Piano Post! It was a pretty hectic season, even with masks and closings. I hope you are all safe and well and if not vaccinated, I hope you will reconsider that as well. My whole family has taken the shots, including my 98 year old mother-in-law who has asthma and my 91 year old father who has congestive heart failure and am happy to report we are all well and had few side effects. As I have been sending out with my appointment reminders, mask mandates have been loosened, but I am more than happy to wear a mask for you if you wish me to do so. Do not hesitate to ask.

I usually have concerts and recitals listed here, but I'm not sure what the local universities and the musical ensembles are doing. I just received my season ticket information from Otterbein Theatre, so I know they are planning live performances starting in September. I imagine others will follow, but also would imagine that now that they have the technology, hybrid concerts/recitals that have a streaming option, may be the future.

otterbein.edu/drama music.osu.edu

<https://www.capital.edu/academics/conservatory/>

music.osu.edu

<https://columbussymphony.com/events>

<https://promusicacolumbus.org/current-season/>

Piano Teachers

In addition to this list, also check out the OMTA's website: www.ceomta.org.

43004 Blacklick

Katherine Wolfe 614-861-4569

43015 Delaware

Trista Hill 740-363-5544

43017-16 Dublin

Amy Laurence 614-764-2775

Rita Lewandowski 630-220-9127

43026 Hilliard

Debra Mattera 614-529-1133

Julia Bolton 614-465-7512

43064 Plain City

Laura Phipps 614-733-3770

43147 Pickerington

Laurie Loper 614-856-0826

43065 Powell

Sara Marie Brenner 740-938-9090

43081-82 Westerville

Debra Aichele 614-891-5303

Susan Treer 614-316-1019

Marianne Brown 614-898-0900

Amy Girvin 614-899-2711

43085 Worthington

Janice Cook 614-848-3360

Karen Hittepole 614-888-6736

43123 Grove City

Beth Kloes 513-767-0699

43235, 43035 Lewis Center, N. Worth.

Janet Sinzinger 614-846-0869

Theresa Murphy 614-832-0045

Sara Marie Brenner 740-938-9090

43209 Bexley

Debra Bradshaw 614-846-9386

Jessica Heitmeyer 614-869-0151

43212 Grandview

Rick Markle 614-599-9963

43214, 43202 Clintonville

Margaret Atkinson 614-267-1726

Cynthia Mahaney 614-263-9965

43229 Columbus

Debbie VerMeer 614-890-0416

43220, 43221 U.A., Columbus

Cynthia Adams 614-327-1395

Kristin Basore 614-570-0533

Gerry Willke 614-451-8137

Liz Atkinson 614-485-9448