

Piano Wellness Warm-ups

Stand side-by-side facing the piano, the student between the piano and bench. In a slow, calm voice, speak these words:

Mountain Pose. Let's stand with our feet about hip-width apart, toes pointing forward, arms hanging and relaxed at our sides.

Let's have a slight bend in our knees, and keep our upper bodies stacked and balanced above.

Now, keeping the slight bend in the knees, I'd like you to take a deep breath with me and let everything go that has happened so far today.

You don't need to think about anything that happened at school today, or the trip here to your piano lesson. Let's just focus on the music we are going to make together.

You might start to feel energy in your legs.

While we're here I want you to feel your feet becoming grounded down into the floor. Feel the pull down. All four corners of your feet are sinking, growing roots like a giant tree.

And as your lower body feels the pull down, let your upper body lift upwards slightly, like a tree growing gently toward the sun.

Now, while continuing to keep the slight bend in the knees, we're going to take a deep, slow breath in, and through the breath, roll our shoulders,

starting in the low, relaxed position, rolling around to the front, then up.

And at the top, we'll begin to breathe out, roll our shoulders back and around, all the way back to the bottom.

As we roll our shoulders and breathe a second time, I'd like you to think about something you're looking forward to playing today.

Let's just take a moment to turn our heads around to release any tension in our necks.

Now, we're going to lower ourselves slowly into a sitting position. Once your feet are comfortable, see if you can keep the feeling of being grounded in the feet, with a bit of energy in your legs, as they help hold you in your sitting position.

With our arms feeling nice and relaxed, and our torsos feeling lifted, let's breathe in and out through one more shoulder roll. By now all tension should be gone.

Tripod Pose. When we sit at the piano, there are three points of support: the sits bones, and two feet.

Imagine the piano is a magnet pulling you gently forward. Pivot your upper body from

your hip joint, with a slight lean forward.

Flashlight Pose. Now let's stretch our arms forward, fingers reaching out like the bright beams of flashlights. As you do, breathe in deeply. Hold for a moment, and as you release your breath, squeeze your hands tight. And two more. And one more.

Knee Cups. Continue a forward lean, and keeping a lift in your torso, slide your hands slowly down your thighs. Cup your knees gently and notice how natural and relaxed your hand shape is.

If while playing you feel tension, return your hands to your knees to renew this tension-free feeling.

Key Twists. Now breathe in and place your right hand on the middle white keys in a comfortable hand pose. As you breathe out slowly, slide your hand down as far as it can go.

Breathe in again and place your left hand on the middle white keys. Breathe out and slide up the piano as far as you can.

Now as we begin to make music, continue to feel grounded in your feet, lifted in your torso, and tension-free in your shoulders and hands.