

# Young Pianists Power Up!

## Building Knowledge and Skill through Warm-ups

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### *Pedagogical Approach*

With the purposeful and routine use of keyboard warm-ups, students are able to increase their technical command, ability to control sound, knowledge of common patterns, and aural skills. Teachers are encouraged to have students transpose exercises, verbalize knowledge, and transfer learning to other skill areas in the lesson. The best way for students to practice these warm-ups is by ear or memory, to devote all attention to sound and technique. Thus, teach these by rote modeling, with lyrics, and accompanied by graphic notation or videos (to augment memory).

There are six categories of technique to consider at the elementary through early intermediate levels:

1. Five finger patterns
2. Intervals & Triads
3. Progressions
4. Scales
5. Arpeggios
6. New Techniques

The goal is for students to feel self-efficacy in their keyboard skills: “I can play it, hear it, and know it.” This includes:

- Technical abilities
- Listening and ear skills
- Theoretical knowledge

Each section of this hand-out is organized in progressive order. Ideally, each drill is learned in many (if not all) keys, although students may learn “white” keys in initial patterns, adding more “black” keys as ability and knowledge increase. See the notational examples for possible formations. NOTE: For many examples, only the first iterations of the pattern are shown.

### *1. Five-Finger Patterns*

1. Single hand, legato and staccato, ending with I-V-I
2. Accompanied with a blocked fifth
3. Simple parallel motion with broken triad and V-I
4. In triplets for increased speed
5. Hand independence, legato-staccato
6. Hand independence, accompanied with I-V-I
7. Hand independence, one hand twice as fast

**Technical abilities:** hand/finger shape, digital movement, elastic wrist, hand independence, navigating black keys (placement of hand)

**Listening and ear skills:** even tone and full sound on every finger, legato/staccato touch

**Theoretical knowledge:** Sharp/flat, whole and half step, major/minor, tonic and dominant

*See examples on next page*

## 2. Intervals & Triads

1. 2nd-3rd-4th-5th, broken and blocked
2. Major triads, in key groups
3. Major/minor 3rds, perfect 5ths, and triads
4. Major-minor-major triads
5. Single hand, triads and inversions, blocked and broken
6. Triad crawl: Major-Augmented-Major-Minor-Diminished
7. 5th-6th-7th-8th (when hand is large enough)

**Technical abilities:** firm and tall bridge, elastic wrist, free arm in and out of keys, expanded hand

**Listening and ear skills:** ensemble in attack and release

**Theoretical knowledge:** intervals (eventually 2nd through 8ve), triad qualities

### Key groups to explore for 5fp and triads

Natural	Sharp middle	Natural middle	Opposites
C G F	D A E	D $\flat$ A $\flat$ E $\flat$	B B $\flat$ (F) F $\sharp$

### 3. Progressions

1. I-V-I, i-V-i (root position only)
2. I-IV-V-I, i-iv-V-i (root position only)
3. I-IV-I-V-I, i-iv-i-V-I (in close position)
4. Dominant seventh chords with resolution
5. I-IV-I-V-V7-I

**Technical abilities:** free arm and moving positions fingering conventions

**Listening and ear skills:** balance, harmonic pedaling

**Theoretical knowledge:** primary chords and resolutions, application of key signatures

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The score is divided into four distinct sections, each with a specific performance instruction written below the notes:

- Section 1:** Labeled "All progressions played also with hands switching parts." It shows a sequence of chords in both hands.
- Section 2:** Labeled "Played with overlapped pedal." It features a progression of chords with a sustained pedal point in the bass.
- Section 3:** Labeled "Played with individual hands." This section shows chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand.
- Section 4:** Labeled "Played with overlapped pedal." It returns to a progression of chords with a sustained pedal point.

### 4. Scales

1. Slow quarters, single octave, single hand, legato
2. Slow contrary motion scales, legato
3. Eighth note, two octave, single hand
  - a. legato
  - b. staccato
  - c. shaping
4. Slow parallel motion scales, one octave, legato

#### Progressive keys to explore for scales

Initial Core:	<b>F C G D</b>	<b>d a e*</b>
Expanded Core:	<b>F C G D A E B</b>	<b>d a e</b>
First Black Keys:	<b>B<math>\flat</math> F C G D A E B F<math>\sharp</math></b>	<b>g d a e</b>
All Keys:	<b>A<math>\flat</math> E<math>\flat</math> B<math>\flat</math> F C G D A E B F<math>\sharp</math> D<math>\flat</math></b>	<b>c g d a e b</b>

\*Minor scales in all three forms: natural, harmonic, melodic

**Technical abilities:** use of thumb (crossing and flexibility), height of bridge, free arm and torso, common fingering patterns

**Listening and ear skills:** clarity of fingers, lightness of thumb, variety of touch, shaping

**Theoretical knowledge:** key signatures, scale qualities, related keys, circle of fifths

## 5. Arpeggios

Compared to all the other categories, arpeggios will be the final to begin.

1. Slow quarters, one octave, single hand, using only natural keys
  - a. RH up-down
  - b. LH down-up
2. One octave, single hand, major and minor from natural keys
3. Two octave, single hand
  - a. From flat keys
  - b. From natural keys

**Technical abilities:** change of direction, angle of hand, flexibility of thumb, free arm and torso,

**Listening and ear skills:** clarity of each finger, light thumb

**Theoretical knowledge:** broken triad patterns

## 6. New Techniques

1. 5th-6th-5th motions
2. Parallel sixths up a scale, blocked and broken
3. Cross-over fingering, fifths and sixths "cadence"
4. Chromatic scale
5. Hopping octaves
6. Cadence motion V-I, 5-1-2

**Technical abilities:** elastic wrist, flexible thumb, crossing over, extension, contraction

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 3/4 time. The treble staff begins with the instruction "One hand at a time" and shows a sequence of chords: C major, D major, E major, F major, G major, A major, B major, and C major. The bass staff shows a sequence of chords: C major, D major, E major, F major, G major, A major, B major, and C major. The second system also consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The treble staff shows a sequence of chords: C major, D major, E major, F major, G major, A major, B major, and C major. The bass staff shows a sequence of chords: C major, D major, E major, F major, G major, A major, B major, and C major. The notation includes various annotations such as "etc.", "Half step down.", "Whole step up.", "Fingers 1-5, etc.", and "Fingers 1-5-2, etc.".