



# Tips & Guides

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## Table of Contents:

[How to Configure Your Virtual Lesson Setup](#) – Page 2

[How to Position Your Device's Camera](#) – Page 3

[Digital Piano vs Acoustic Piano vs Keyboard](#) – Page 4

[Recommended Digital, Acoustic Pianos and Keyboards](#) – Page 5

[Tips for Good Practice](#) – Page 6

[How to Motivate Yourself](#) – Page 7

[What You Should Do as a Parent](#) – Page 8

[How to Make Home Percussion for Children](#) – Page 9

## How to Configure Your Virtual Lesson Setup

### Your choice of device:

- **Laptop or Desktop PC/Mac** – This may be the preferable option simply due to the screen size. Laptops can be reliably positioned and tilted to achieve a comfortable viewing angle. Both desktop and laptop computers can be connected to a modem via an ethernet cable for a fast, reliable wired internet connection (a laptop may require an adapter). However, desktops do not come with webcams and most laptops have low-quality built-in webcams. Having a higher quality webcam (720p/1080p) is highly recommended.
- **Tablet** – Has a smaller screen, but a good built-in camera! A tablet depends on a fast, reliable Wi-Fi connection. If you can manage the smaller screen size, then it is a great option. A smartphone is not recommended but can be used.

### Using your tablet / phone as a PC webcam for virtual lessons:

The best of both worlds – Use your mobile device's excellent quality camera with your computer:

For Android Devices:

<https://www.dev47apps.com/> (\*Also works with iOS devices plugged into a Windows PC)

For iOS Devices:

<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT213244>

- Online lessons are scheduled and conducted on **Google Meet**: <https://meet.google.com>
- Free notation software - **MuseScore**: <https://musescore.org/en>

\*Please prepare a pencil + stave music notebook for your lessons or use MuseScore

\*You should be able to mark your scores: print them or use a tablet

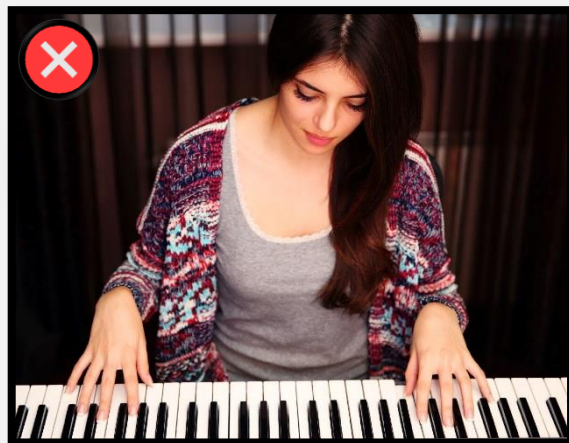
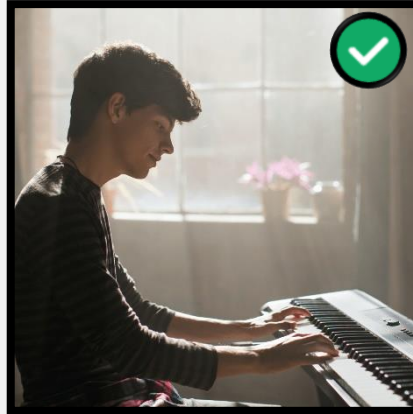
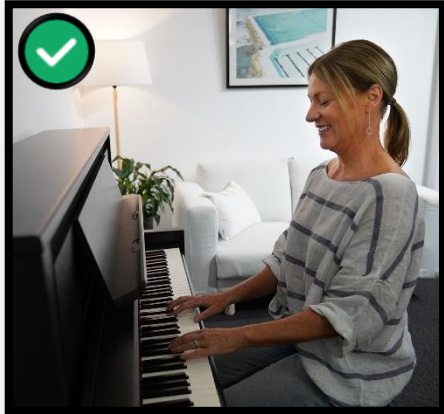
Jump to Page: [Table of Contents](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) |

## How to Position your Device's Camera for a Virtual Lesson?

Please test your setup and make sure everything is ready and working before the lesson

Your camera should reflect your side profile so your body and hand posture can be seen.

Here are some examples:



## Digital Piano vs Acoustic Piano vs Keyboard

Let's start with definitions:

**Acoustic piano** – Upright or Grand piano

**Digital piano** – Electric keyboard with the full piano range of 88 weighted keys

**Keyboard** – Electric keyboard with 61 keys usually, which are lightly weighted

For students looking to purchase their first instrument I recommend buying a digital piano.

Why? An acoustic piano is a much costlier investment and is harder to sell in case of lost interest. Once you improve, you will feel like you've earned a real piano! If you already have an acoustic piano, then great – but make sure it's tuned and regulated by a professional, this is important. Lastly, digital pianos have weighted keys which are more realistic than keyboards and are important to developing proper finger technique.

Here is a table comparing acoustic and digital pianos:

Acoustic Piano	Digital Piano
Best sound and feel	Many sounds, can practice with headphones
Use a free metronome app	Built in metronome (or can use a free app)
Requires maintenance & tuning	No maintenance
Hard to record good sound	Easy to record good sound (Audio File)

Keyboards, as discussed, have lightly weighted keys. a keyboard can in fact be sufficient for the first ~6-12 months pending an upgrade, especially if it's for a child. This is the cheapest option with the added benefit that after upgrading you are left with a portable, play-anywhere instrument. In such case, a keyboard as a first instrument is a viable option to consider.

Jump to Page: [Table of Contents](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) |

## Recommended Digital Pianos, Acoustic Pianos and Keyboards

Please note, I am not sponsored by any company. My recommendation is based solely on experience. **Make sure any model of either digital piano or keyboard you buy has built in speakers and 61+ keys.** Of course, you may choose different makers based on preference and availability.

### **Digital Pianos**

- Entry level instruments: Kawai ES120, Yamaha P-225
- Intermediate / Advanced players: Kawai ES920, Yamaha P-525, Roland FP-90X

### **Keyboards**

- Entry level instruments: Casio CT-S1, Casio CT-S500, Yamaha PSR-483

### **Acoustic Pianos**

- As your first acoustic piano: Kawai K-300, Yamaha U1, Yamaha U3
- Intermediate / Advanced players should evaluate available pianos by themselves

## Tips for Good Practice

- Fixed hours: Turn your practice sessions into a habit. Using fixed times may help you remember to do so, just like you remember to brush your teeth after dinner.
- Duration: Early on, there is no need to practice more than 45 minutes, even 30 could suffice. Practice time increases the more you advance. No need to play every single day either, let your brain rest. My recommendation would be 4 days a week.
- Planning: How many exercises/pieces do you have? Make sure you go through all your homework. Prioritize difficult tunes but do not start and end with something difficult.
- Monitoring: Always doubt and ask yourself questions while practicing, for example: "Am I sure I read this note correctly?" or "This sounds harsh. Did I make a mistake"? Eliminate doubt by finding the underlying cause of an issue so you can be confident that you are correct.
- Feedback: Feedback is important to receive in a timely manner. Of course, you are given feedback during our lessons, but when practicing by yourself there are 3 ways to get it: 1) Practice with a metronome or a drum loop 2) listen to the recording of the original tune 3) Record your playing and take notes afterwards.
- Singing: You don't have to be a singer, but singing what you are about to play is priceless. Only if you can sing the melody in the correct rhythm or hear it in your head – you can play it on the piano.
- Marking your Music: Make sure you can make notes on your music. Either print your scores or use a tablet and a pen. It is recommended to use a tablet no smaller than 11.5-inch.
- Don't overplay what's already too easy: Remember, you can either play well or improve, but not have both at the same time!

## How to Motivate Yourself

- Listen to new music: Find joy in exploring music you don't know. This is important. If you are only willing to learn songs you already know, how can you develop musical taste?
- Find role models: Sure, I'm your teacher. However, you should browse online and find another pianist, keyboard player or a musician you would say: "I want to play like him", or "She sounds Cool!"
- Find colleagues: Befriend other music students who are on a comparable level. Since you're going through similar things, it'd be helpful in dealing with hardships and sharing successes.
- Film your progress: Make your own piano video diary. Film your journey, look back and see how you have improved (i.e., YouTube videos such as "1-year piano progress")
- Set up your musical space: Arrange your practice corner to radiate musical energy: Hang music related pictures on the wall, place music home décor near your piano, etc.
- Mess with your keyboard: If you have a keyboard or a digital piano, play with the different sounds and rhythms, have fun experimenting with other features.
- Play with friends: When you have been practicing by yourself for a while now, it may be time to invite a friend or two over for a jam session.
- Pick up a secondary instrument: Piano is a very demanding instrument that requires a lot of time and dedicated practice. Not all instruments are like this, e.g., an egg shaker, xylophone, or clave. These are cheap, easy to play and will contribute to a continued interest in music making.
- Synthesis: Advanced players – explore music tech and sound design. Learn to recreate and play your favorite synthesizer keyboard parts. Such sounds can be crafted on a computer via Virtual Instruments (VSTs) or found as presets on dedicated keyboards.
- Join our Masterclasses / Group Lessons: Lectures and workshops for adults & kids about various subjects from world music, sound design, composition, and history - enriching your musical world and contributing to continued interest. Contact me for more details.

## What You Should Do as a Parent

(Whenever the text mentions male pronouns, female also apply)

- Kindly make sure your child practices as he should. Guilt is not a good motivator nor is external reward. It is wholesome to sit down with him for his practice sessions in the beginning.
- If your child is ill or had an unusually busy week and didn't practice much, do let him know that it is totally okay – he shouldn't feel anxious for his upcoming lesson.
- Encourage your child to perform to you after he has learned a tune. Make time to just sit there and listen to him playing what he has worked so hard to achieve.
- Stay connected with me – voice chat over text when needed. I would like to hear any thoughts you may have regarding how he's managing – it's my job is to adapt to the student's needs as I can. Of course, you are more than welcome to contact me in case of good news too! I will do the same.
- Read pages 6 and 7 about practice tips and motivation and see what you can do.



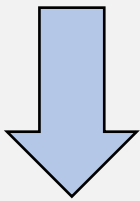
## How to Make Home Percussion for Children

Learning music is so much more than just piano technique. To further get your child motivated and increase his interest in music, you can easily use household objects to quickly create musical instruments.



Claves

Wood Block

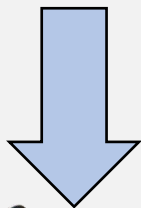


X2 Wooden  
Spoons



Maracas

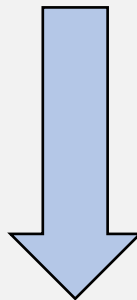
Tambourine



a Bottle  
Half Full of  
Water or Rice



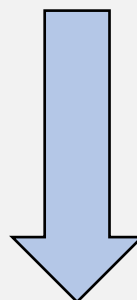
Triangle



a Glass +  
Teaspoon



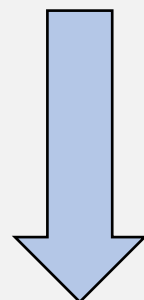
Guiro



a Grater +  
Teaspoon  
(or stick)



Monochord



a Rubber Band  
Strapped Around  
a Yogurt Cup