



508-651-2590 Natick Studio
978-568-0627 Home Phone
57 Hunter Avenue
Hudson, MA 01749-3043

ed@edmascari.com
www.edmascariplanostudio.com

The Key Is To Get To The Keys!

How to Set-up & Maintain a Successful Practice Routine

Have you ever come to your piano lesson and complained that you didn't have enough time to practice? Most people have! This particular problem often frustrates not only your fellow students but professional pianists as well.

You might feel guilty because you are investing a lot of time and money in developing your musical gifts and talents. So you ask yourself, "How can I truly justify these costs? Why do I keep coming for lessons when I don't spend enough time practicing?"

The answer is likely because you love the piano. Your determination is driven by a deep-seated desire to create delightful music.

How are you going to resolve your dilemma? Where will you begin?

The key is to get to the keys!

Once you commit yourself to making contact with the keyboard more consistently, you will start seeing the step-by-step solution unfold.

By applying the skill of self-awareness, you will be able to identify some of the issues that invariably have an impact on whether or not you get to the piano in any given week.

Here are four factors for you to consider as you implement your process of **self-awareness**:

- **Examine your schedule for each day of the week.**
(What are your appointments, commitments, priorities, etc.?)
- **Pay attention to your energy level at different times of the day.**
(Are you a morning person? An evening person? Neither?)
- **Notice how your practice schedule and location affects others who live in your home** (or even in close proximity if you live in an apartment).
Do they complain? Do they distract or criticize you?
- **Reflect on your primary reasons for playing the piano.**
(Do you find it relaxing and / or mentally stimulating? Are you perhaps entertaining the idea of becoming a prestigious professional performer?)

If you are like most people, including me, you will occasionally encounter conflicts, which can cause you to **feel torn about your commitment to getting to the keyboard more consistently.**

Copyright © 2006 by Edward P. Mascari
All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured.

www.edmascariplanostudio.com Phone 508-651-2590 ed@edmascari.com



508-651-2590 Natick Studio
978-568-0627 Home Phone
57 Hunter Avenue
Hudson, MA 01749-3043

ed@edmascari.com
www.edmascariplanostudio.com

Remember that:

- You are not the only one with this problem.
- You are not a failure if you can't settle into a routine immediately.
- You are not selfish because you have a sincere desire and deep-seated need to practice regularly and systematically.
- You are not inferior because your new practice routine doesn't result in your being able to play every piece perfectly.

I'm sure that you can add a few of your own defeating thought patterns to this list. But...

Here are five proven methods which will inspire and empower you to make consistent contact with the keyboard every week:

1. **Select one piece of music that you want to play.** Make it your goal to go to the piano (or keyboard) every day and play the entire piece (or section of it) at least once. This can take place at any time of day or evening and need not occur at the same hour each day.
2. **Make a written record of the times on each of the days that you played the piano (regardless of how long you practiced).** In addition, take note of how you felt while engaged in this essential enterprise. Did you feel peaceful, pressured, energized, excited, frustrated, fatigued, satisfied or gratified?
3. **Experiment with various schedules for a few weeks.** Based on your observations, go to the keyboard and work at the times which you have found to be the most conducive to your feeling of being focused and positive about your piano practicing experience.
4. **Exercise patience with yourself as well as with the process.** It usually takes two to four weeks to develop a dependable habit. You will only be able to establish your regular routine after a period of trial and error. So give yourself permission to let this practical program take as much time as it requires to become a reliable regimen.
5. **Persevere with unwavering persistence.** Although it's easy to acknowledge something mentally, you will only accomplish authentic achievement when you succeed at systemizing a suitable practicing schedule.

You may be asking right now, "Will this really work for me?"

Here are some examples of how students just like you who have found a solution that works for them:

Copyright © 2006 by Edward P. Mascari
All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured.
www.edmascariplanostudio.com Phone 508-651-2590 ed@edmascari.com

- **Practicing in the morning**

- Jerry is an intermediate level adult student who enjoys playing the music of Bach, blues and the Beatles. Although he works at home, he has many obligations that vie for his attention. Jerry finds that he can maintain a consistent practice schedule when he plays the piano **before** he migrates to his office down the hall. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down at the keyboard. By the time he begins his work day, he feels more awake, alert, coherent and content. This method of prioritizing works extremely well for Jerry. Perhaps this is your *cup of tea*.
- Sarah, Tommy, Emma and Mike all attend elementary school. Each of them likes to practice before getting on the school bus. Since they all wake up early, they have time to practice music in the morning. Playtime with friends, soccer practice, Hebrew school, dance classes and a variety of other assorted activities occupy the hours for each of these busy youngsters every afternoon. By the time they have dinner and do their homework, these four active young people are more than ready to relax before retiring to their rooms for bed. Is your daughter an early riser? Why not try assisting her adjust her a.m. routine? Like her peers, positive results are sure to follow!
- Dennis took up the piano after his daughters got married. He had been progressing positively in his quest to achieve his long-awaited aspiration. Somewhat by surprise, several health issues surfaced. It was long overdue, but he simply had to build an exercise routine into his already busy day. How could he find time for both the piano and physical fitness? He experimented for a few weeks. Dennis is a morning person, and because he is more alert at that time of the day, he ascertained that he could be more attentive to his artistic endeavors early in the day. Thus he found that by practicing his scales, songs and classical selections before leaving for work and going to the gym on his way home he was able to achieve consistent results in both areas. How about you? Would you consider carving out some creative time *in the wee small hours of the morning*?

- **Practicing in the evening**

- Michael is a doctor who begins his work day quite early. Immediately after getting out of bed, he turns on the morning news, dons his sneakers and begins the unchanging cardio routine that for more than 25 years has provided him with the physical stamina so necessary to meet the needs of his numerous patients. As a way to unwind after spending so many scheduled surgical hours, this physician finds that he enjoys practicing the piano at night because at long last, there are no time constraints to contain his more creative crusades. *How would this type of after-supper soirée suit your sensibilities?*

- High school students Peter, Cathy and Bill arrive home late due to after-school sports practice and games. As you might expect, they're beat. "How can they face all of that homework?" you might ask. They simply can't, at least immediately. Instead, they see their dedication to practicing the piano as a welcomed diversion from their high degree of demanding academic requirements.

These three high achievers take this time before eating dinner to ensure that their musical endeavors continue expand with a consistency that is clearly evident.

- Diane is a woman who truly knows how to maximize her time. During her daily commute to and from her computer job, she listens to CDs of various top performers playing songs from her repertoire. It is because of this interest and investment in incorporating musical inspiration into her day, that Diane can continue to maintain the energy and motivation required to sustain her extremely comprehensive and open-ended practicing routine.

Perhaps a bit intense for you? At first, this might seem to be the case. Why not give it a try anyway? What do you have to lose? *I'm sure that you'll be surprised to see the impact of listening on your success!*

- **Practicing regardless of the time of day**

- Susie is a 10 year old student who sustains an extremely busy after-school schedule which balances ballet and modern dance classes, as well as Hebrew school and flute studies, with her piano lessons. Her consistent musical growth continues to evolve, because she has the ability to focus on short sections of several musical selections six days per week. Needless to say, Susie feels a sense of accomplishment for all she is able to achieve. *Have you considered using Susie's short sections system as your solution?*

- An advanced high school student named Ben has learned that by limiting the number of new pieces that he prioritizes within his practicing program, he can become more deeply involved, immersed and inspired by each song or sampling from the repertoire. He first defines and then determines which one or two musical offerings will best energize, excite and motivate him for an extended period of time. As a result, his musical growth has been astounding! *Do you want to astound yourself and others with your musical growth? Of course you do. What are you waiting for? Why not give this method a test drive?*

The Grand Finale

The next time you hear yourself or your child saying: "I don't have enough time to practice", **STOP**.

Remember: the key is to get to the keys!



508-651-2590 Natick Studio
978-568-0627 Home Phone
57 Hunter Avenue
Hudson, MA 01749-3043

ed@edmascari.com
www.edmascariplanostudio.com

Now it's your turn. Are you ready to give it a go?
Don't you want to follow Ben or Susie or Jerry or Diane? Of course you do!

Simply follow this step-by-step solution to setting up and maintaining your successful practice routine and you'll be succeeding before you know it!

- Focus on playing one piece of music that you enjoy every day
- Be aware of how you feel when you practice i.e. ask yourself:
"Do I feel relaxed, peaceful, tired, pressured, fulfilled, energized etc.?"
- Continue to experiment with practice times on each day until you discover the most effective, practical and satisfying schedule that will work for you
- Be persistent and consistent, unswerving and steadfast, persevere!

You may be asking: "Why is all of this fine tuning so important, valuable and necessary?"
Just ask Michael or Cathy or Dennis. They'll tell you that:

These powerful strategies for taking charge of your daily piano practicing routine will:

- enable you to fine-tune your musical skills
- turn your free time into learning time
- unlock your potential
- help you to create healthy, winning habits
- build your self-confidence and self-esteem
- empower you to create more time in your schedule for the things that matter

Be sure to take advantage of our two free assessment tools which you can download from this Subscribers Only Page. These reliable resources are designed to help you set up and maintain your very own successful practicing routine.

Are you ready to reap the rewards and get the results you want?

**Why wait another day? Take this important first step.
You'll be glad you did.**

I look forward to hearing from you about your experiences with this new process.
Please feel free to email me: ed@edmascari.com In the meantime, enjoy your music making!

Copyright © 2006 by Edward P. Mascari
All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured.
www.edmascariplanostudio.com Phone 508-651-2590 ed@edmascari.com