

LEARN FROM THE PENGUIN TO IMPROVE YOUR PIANO POSTURE



Who would believe a penguin, right? Well, I hope I got your attention, because that was my aim. We might think that penguins are clumsy with the way they waddle their feet on land. However, once in the water they are well-adapted to life in the ocean and are a vision of gracefulness. Like the waddling penguins, I've seen many a student with uncomfortable looking posture at the piano bench. As a result, their playing is not up to standard. Dare I say that posture effects practically every aspect of one's piano playing. Here's how to improve. Let's leap in!

For a comfortable position while playing the piano, you may need to adjust the height of the piano bench and your distance from the keyboard.

- Begin by adjusting the height of your piano bench. If you are fortunate to be tall enough and to have an adjustable bench, you can likely turn the knobs to raise or lower the seat for your appropriate height.
- If you can't raise the seat on your piano bench, a foam pad seat cushion may be your new piano pal in more than one way. A foam pad is softer than a hard bench to sit on while practicing, and it will improve your posture. Online stores, such as houzz, carries reasonably priced 2-inch and 3-inch thick foam seat cushion pads. Some feature handles, making the pads easy to

carry to your lesson or even to a recital. Home Depot and other online sites also offer inexpensive foam seat cushions.

Follow these simple directions to improve your piano posture.

- 1) Place your forearms from the back of your hand through your wrist to your elbow parallel to the floor and pointing straight towards the piano.
- 2) If you are sitting too low, add one cushion at a time, or turn the knobs on the bench to sit at the appropriate height.
- 3) Then rest your hands comfortably on the keys with your arms relaxed.
- 4) With your hands in playing position, slightly bend your wrists lower with hands on the keys.
- 5) Sit closely enough to keep from fully extending your arms.
- 6) Keep your elbows slightly in front of your stomach and slightly below the height of your hands, about level with the keys.
- 7) Fit your legs under the piano. If your feet don't touch the floor, use a foot stool to rest your feet. Then you may need to add foam pads or some type of addition on top of the foot stool to create a comfortable resting position for your feet.
- 8) Rather than sitting in the center of the bench, sit closer to the front edge of the bench to firmly plant your feet on the floor (or stool).
- 9) Sit with a straight back and relaxed shoulders. Keep your head straight, even when not using music.

More sound advice:

- ♪ Reach for high and low notes while sitting in the center of the piano bench, not sliding from one side to the other.
- ♪ If you require using a pedal, and your feet don't touch the floor, consider investing in a pedal extender.

What did you learn from the penguin? Although, the penguin was graceful and well-adapted to the life in the ocean, he was clumsy on land. How can you relate that to your piano posture? Now, hopefully you have adapted yourself to the piano bench by greatly improving your posture after making a few adjustments. You may even have a slight appearance of a piano virtuoso with your new position at the keyboard. However, most importantly, you are now well on your way to becoming a more accomplished musician.