



Canadian Organ News[©]

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Bell Piano Newsletter[©]



Caring for the Piano

Pianos need to be placed in the room with good temperature and humidity. A basement piano may be damp in the summer and too dry in the winter. A constant room humidity of 40% and temperature of 72F or 20C degrees is best. Avoid extremes that will affect the wood, metal and felt components.

What To Do and Not Do

- Do not put plants on the piano unless they are artificial.
- Keep all liquids away as they can stain and soak into the wood, especially older pianos.
- Smoking will seep into the wood staying there for years and can get into the felts shorten their life.
- When dusting the outside use a dry swiffer cloth or lint free cloth. Use a damp cloth on modern pianos. Use lemon oil on older pianos to help protect the wood. Do not use a spray wax on either type of piano as it will stain. If a spray has to be used spray the cloth first.
- Leave the covers on the pianos closed until they are played especially grand pianos.
- Only vacuuming open areas but be careful. The strings and pins can be knocked out of alignment or broken if hit by a vacuum part. Suck up the loose dust around the inside of the piano but do not go over the strings or action parts. A can of compressed air can be used to blow dust off and down.
(Medical note: when using compressed air to clean an old piano use a face mask and goggles to prevent inhaling any germs. Also do it when there are no young children around. Spray in short bursts, then pause before using the vacuum.)
- Insects and mice love to get into pianos to live and nest. Both will nibble away at felt parts such as hammers and dampers. They will also leave behind their droppings creating a health risk for the family.

Tuning the Piano

If the piano is a new modern made piano it needs to be tuned 2 to 4 times during the first year. This will ensure the pins and strings are tightened to the proper tensions. Strings will loosen up at different rates causing an awful noise. When properly tuned and maintained the strings should loosen up at the same rate thus creating a uniform flatness throughout the piano.

Otherwise tune a piano at least once a year. This ensures the tuning pins are kept at the proper tension and position within the frame. The longer a piano is not tuned the pins will tighten up to such a degree that they will not move. Pianos that are tuned regularly can be done in 90 minutes and ones that are not takes 3 to 4 hours. Tuning costs will vary depending on how often the piano is tuned.

Repairing and Rebuilding

Minor home repairs include bridal straps or a string. The cost of the parts are usually low but it does take time to do. An intermediate repair would be replacing all the key tops which are done in the shop.

Major repairs require the piano being moved to the piano shop. These include hammer and damper replacement, restringing the entire piano and refinishing the outside case. Times and costs will vary depending upon the amount of time and work is involved. Moving costs to and from the piano shop are extra. Consult with a piano technician before any repairs are done.

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