



*Self-Diagnostics to Free Your
Fingers and Improve Sound*

THE ARM ADVANTAGE



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The purpose of these activities is to help you understand your arm's role in playing the piano. Try them out. Hopefully you'll experience how your arm can make the job of the fingers easier.

“According to Chopin, evenness in scales (and in arpeggios) depended above all on a constant sideways movement of the hands (with the elbow hanging freely and always loose); continuous and even-flowing rather than in steps, a movement he illustrated by a glissando over the keys.”

Karl Mikuli





Can You Move Your Arm While Holding a Note?

Rest one finger and your arm gently on a key. While keeping the note down, move your arm side-to-side, forward and back, and slightly up and down.

Your wrist should stay steady — not stiff, just solid enough so the whole hand moves with your arm.

If your wrist collapses or flops, your arm can't guide your hand effectively.



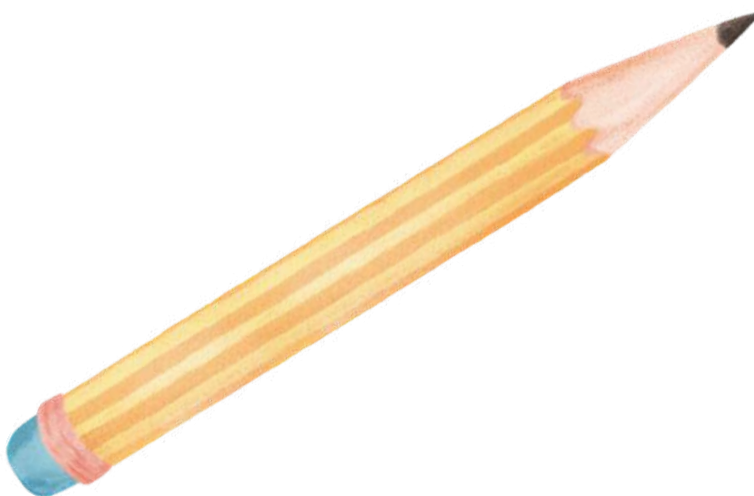
2

Is Your Arm Doing Enough of the Work?

Hold a pencil loosely in your fist. Use your arm to lower the pencil onto a key and lift it off again, keeping your wrist steady.

Then try the same with a single finger instead of the pencil. Many people start pushing or squeezing with the finger without realizing it.

The pencil forces your arm to do more of the work — aim for that same feeling when you play with your fingers.



3

Does Your Arm Adjust Side-to-Side Behind Each Finger?

Play a wide five-note pattern, for example, the one shown below. Let your arm travel sideways so it's directly behind each finger before you play.

Then connect the notes, keeping that same arm-led motion.

This prevents you from stretching fingers ahead or lagging behind.



This is the Chopin exercise I showed
in the video



Manuscript copy of all of Chopin's exercises
for his niece.

Source: Chopin and His Pupils by Eidelgenger

4

Does Your Arm Adjust Up and Down for Black and White Keys?

Play a phrase that moves between black and white keys.

Notice if your arm naturally rises slightly for black keys and lowers for white keys.

These small height adjustments keep your arm in line with the keys and make playing easier and more resonant.



5

Putting It All Together

Take a short phrase from a piece you're practicing.

Keep your arm behind each finger, avoid reaching ahead, and let your arm lead the motion.

Aim for clarity, ease, and a rich tone — and pause if you feel extra effort or tension creeping in.

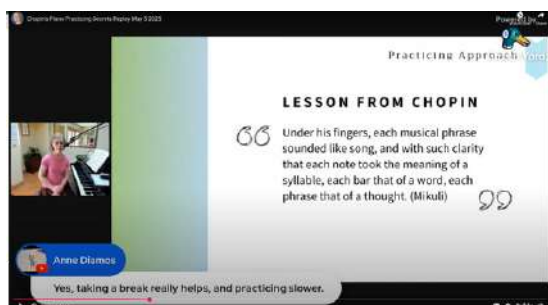
Try to feel your arm balances over each finger the way we balance over one foot at a time when walking.



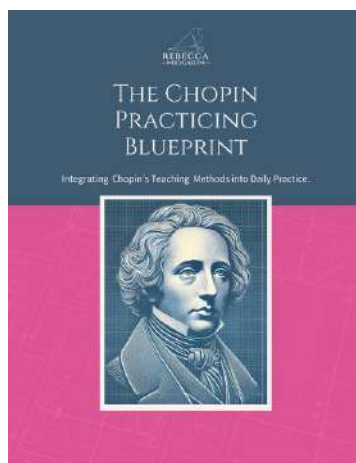
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