

How Long Does It Take to Develop Muscle Memory For Pitching?

Another question that people are looking for answers, especially on my website, is "how long does it take to develop muscle memory for pitching?" In other words, how long will it take to match up the pitches in your ears with the notes your hands are playing?

There are several factors that would relate to how long it would take for your hands to master pitches. First, you would start with basic finger exercises, one of which involves taking your thumb and sliding each of your four fingers across it. Doing this at a fast pace limbers up your fingers to prepare for piano playing.

Second, you do basic positioning exercises by putting your hands on the keyboard and doing a stretch with your thumb and pinky finger from octave to octave. Find one C on the piano and stretch your hand till you find the next C eight keys after the first one.

Third, you will put one finger on the last C you found and stretch your wrist and find the note that is five notes after that C. What you have basically done now is found the octave and fifth.

Fourth, let's recap what you were doing by doing one note and repeating it over and over while saying the note names or the number one. I find that this is one of the exercises that helped me memorize what things were on piano when I was first starting out.

When I started out playing piano by ear, I was only using three fingers. How that worked at first, I don't know, but the repetition of one finger on one note and saying the note name aloud as I was playing it helped me to get familiar with using the proper five-finger technique that you're supposed to use when playing the piano.

Fifth, now that you've repeated the first note over and over, let's do more notes. Let's do two notes at a time, starting with C. Go up from C one note to D and back to C. Keep repeating this over and over saying the note names or numbers (1,2) as you do it. Play the second note with your middle finger of your right hand or the fourth finger of your left hand.

Sixth, do three notes at a time. You would then have C, D, E to play. Keep doing this until you have memorized those three notes. Remember to say the note names as you're playing the notes.

Seventh, This time, we're going to go up to the note F. We do this by playing C, D, and E with our first, second, and third fingers (or if you're using the left hand, your fifth, fourth and third fingers) and then curl your thumb underneath the rest of your right hand and let the thumb rest on the fourth note, F. Repeat this exercise slowly until it is second nature to you. It will take a while, but, in time, you will get

comfortable with it.

Eighth, finally you're going to put the second finger of your right hand on G, the next note, while bringing the thumb of your left hand over to rest on G an octave lower. You have just done what is called a five note warmup. What you should do now is repeat that same five note warmup and stretch pattern so that your hands get used to where they are supposed to stretch to hit the right notes every time. This is by far, one of the simplest ways to master the piano scale while stretching out and limbering your hands. In no time, you will have mastered the warmup and will be able to go onto the next notes of the scale.