

What is an efficient piano technique?

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To know a piece perfectly means to be able to play it flawlessly and without a slightest hesitation at any tempo - from the slowest to the fastest.

The details of the piano playing mechanical process are as follows:

1. First, the shoulder and arm (i.e. transport) move the hand horizontally placing it in the correct position on the right place on the keyboard.
2. Then the fingers (in Neuhaus' method "[soldiers](#)")
 - a. "aim" at the right keys,
 - b. "shoot" i.e. strike them - each at a speed strictly determined by the dynamics,
 - c. and immediately withdraw.

Some very important elements complete this process:

3. The arm at the shoulder, the fingers at the base (knuckles) and the fingertips must be constantly "armed" i.e. suspended, minimally raised and ready to attack. And they all must be so balanced that:
 - a. the slightest impulse unbalances this mechanism and produces a key stroke,
 - b. and after striking, the whole of this mechanism immediately returns to balance.
4. The hand (MA) must neither be relaxed to the point of inertia, nor contracted of course. In the above points 1 and 2a, the hand should be in a state of fixation (see point 2 [on this page](#)) i.e. a slight tension.
5. The entire process described in points 1 and 2 must be precisely controlled by memory, or more exactly by the four memories essential for playing - auditory, tactile, visual and logical. So that the player can be conscious of the precise course of playing, and his fingers do not get lost on the keyboard, but "know" exactly which keys to strike, in what order, which ones together and which ones in sequence, etc.
6. In the memory consolidation of a musical text, the most important thing is to play the piece like in a concert - from beginning to end without stopping and with all the performance details, but at a tempo 20-30% slower than the final one. This should be practiced for many days in a row several times a day. This is also a way to "clean" the piece after a public performance, where accidental mistakes may happen.
7. However, if you have memory slips even at this slower tempo, there is no point in playing faster, because you are just fixing the text with interruptions. When playing at a reduced tempo, you must force yourself to concentrate so hard that no key is struck by inadvertence, but each note is planned in advance.
8. This can be learned perfectly well, but you must be very consistent and attentive when practicing. If a passage is "very resistant" and does not come out even at a very slow tempo, you have to practice it point-by-point, not in the piece. Then you have to gradually integrate it into the whole text, because it often happens that you play an isolated fragment without any problem, and it gets blocked when you play the whole piece.

9. A very good method is to repeat a short passage 3 times in a row not only without any mistake, but even without the slightest hesitation, because any hesitation at a quiet tempo will result in a mistake at full speed. To make this exercise more difficult repeat this difficult passage 4 or 5 times in a row. It is more difficult because you have to play all these repetitions without mistakes or hesitation. Even if you make a mistake **only** in the last repetition, you have to repeat the whole cycle from the beginning. This exercise has an additional advantage: it develops the ability to concentrate.
10. At the beginning, your concentration must be really strong. But its level may (and should) drop when the text has been well mastered. The precision of playing will remain, because intense concentration will be replaced by correct reflexes acquired through repetition of the same movements.