



Piano ownership can be confusing, especially for those new to pianos. I'm here to help you maintain your instrument for maximum enjoyment. Please read on, and if you don't see an answer to your question, you can reach out to me with questions prior to booking an appointment.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Would you like a coffee?**

I'm a tea drinker, but thanks for the offer!

### **How long will tuning take?**

A standard tuning will take approximately an hour. A Complete Care appointment is two hours, and includes the tuning and additional services your piano needs, from cleaning to pitch adjustment for neglected pianos to minor repairs and minor regulation adjustments. Please note that new clients must schedule a Complete Care appointment for their first appointment. A standard tuning is just a tuning, and Complete Care provides more services specific to your piano's needs at the best value.

### **We forgot to book a tuning and there's only a half-hour time window before the band comes to rehearse. Can the piano be tuned in that time?**

No. I am not a wizard.

### **Do you mind if I/we/the children watch?**

Not at all! I love showing people how the piano works. It may take me longer, as I tend to be chatty, and I'm always more than happy to take the time to explain and allow children to explore the instrument.

### **Does the room have to be quiet for the piano to be tuned?**

As quiet as is possible, thanks. Vacuum cleaners and leaf blowers are the most disruptive sounds for tuning. Your kids and pets are less likely to be disruptive, but a quiet environment ensures that I can hear the piano well.

### **How often should it be tuned?**

In the home, twice a year is generally sufficient. Annual tuning can be adequate but it's always a "catch-up" and the piano never gets the chance to become as sweet and as stable as it should be. Pianos in daily use by professional musicians and music teachers and in studio venues will require more frequent attention. I can give you my best recommendation based on the frequency and type of use. Pianos in concert venues are generally tuned before each use.

### **Will tuning also include fixing various assorted faults with keys, strings and pedals? Or make the action work better?**

No. Tuning is just tuning - adjusting the strings to the correct pitch. If the piano has several problems, these will need to be assessed and quoted for separately. A Complete Care appointment addresses the smaller problems.

### **Can you get sticky labels off the keys?**

Yes, though I will charge you for the time as it is time consuming.

### **How should I clean the keys?**

Cory Care produces a range of piano cleaning and polish products. I can supply them, or suggest where to purchase. Cory Key-Brite is safe on all keys. For light cleaning, a damp cloth with a little detergent is fine, then polish with a dry cloth. Don't use methylated spirits or other solvents, and don't spray any cleaner or polish directly onto any part of the piano.

### **Can you fix my Digital Piano?**

No. Electronic keyboards need an electronic engineer. I am able to tune a hybrid piano. If you are not sure what your instrument is, please contact me and send photos.

### **Is it OK to store my piano in the garage for a while?**

No, it's not. Even though your garage may be generally wind and water tight, it just isn't a suitable environment for an acoustic piano. To put one there even for a short while is asking for trouble. If you cannot store your piano in a room in the house, or have it professionally stored in good conditions, then it's better to sell it and buy another later.

### **How can I find out about the age of my piano and the history of the maker?**

The serial number can be found inside the piano, usually on the cast iron plate. Many newer pianos also have a model number. There are online lists which are cut down from The Musicians Piano Atlas that can give you a clearer picture of the instruments' age and origin of manufacture.

### **My piano is an antique. Is it valuable?**

No. Pianos have almost no antique value. A very fine old concert grand piano may be worth something, not because it is old but because it is a high-quality instrument, and even then, may require extensive rebuilding work.

Exceptions might include: a really unusual instrument of historical interest in the development of the piano; a piano with a special "art case" by a famous designer; a piano formerly owned by a famous musician.

### **I got this amazing piano for free! It just needs a tuning.**

A free piano is never free. Every technician has horror stories of the worst things they've seen in pianos, including damage from cat urine such as cracks in the soundboard, rusty strings, claw marks on the wood; loose tuning pins rendering the piano practically un-tunable; melted candy from the teacher's candy dish; desiccated mouse corpses; rat and mouse feces; and a piano teeming with termites.

Yes, I'm trying to scare you. Rats and mice love to make homes in pianos, using the felt from the hammers as nests. That free piano you found on the street corner? You are not rescuing it, you are potentially bringing hantavirus into your home. Those are the worst case scenarios.

The used market is currently populated with long-expired pianos advertised as "just needs a tuning." The uninformed and unsuspecting public can't resist the siren call of the "cheap" piano, and so these ancient and unserviceable pianos keep circulating the market. The cost of a free piano adds up, and quickly. Avoid Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace for a piano.

Pianos are manufactured to have a lifespan of approximately forty years, and some pianos are made more cheaply than others, with poor quality parts that do not age well. The components of the piano are made from things that used to be alive: felt, wood, suede. Those materials do not

last forever, nor should you expect them to. Piano technicians call pianos past their prime a “Piano Shaped Object.”

### **There is a split in my piano's soundboard; what should I do about it?**

The consensus with soundboard splits is to leave it alone, provided the piano sounds OK. Very fine hairline cracks can sometimes produce a buzz if changes in ambient humidity cause the edges of the split to rub together. There is no cheap and easy solution to that. But often a piano will continue to perform well for decades with splits in the soundboard. They are usually repaired only as part of a comprehensive rebuild.

### **This was my great-granny's piano. It's of sentimental value and I could never part with it. Can you make it good?**

Not if it wasn't good to begin with. And even if it was good but is now very old, probably not. Don't be too sentimental about a piano. Your great-granny wouldn't have wanted you to be. If it's worn out, it's worn out. If you like it for aesthetic reasons, re-purpose it as a piece of furniture. If you want a good quality instrument, get a new piano. Your great-granny did!

### **Can you make the action of my piano heavier/lighter?**

To alter the overall feel of a piano's action is a very complex adjustment. A thorough regulation will make it much better to play. But action regulation is a painstaking and very time-consuming process involving many adjustments for each individual note. I am happy to talk you through the process, time expectations, and cost of a regulation.

### **Someone said my piano isn't at concert pitch; what does concert pitch mean?**

Concert pitch is an international standard for the pitch of musical instruments (exactly how high or low each note is), so that instruments from all places and makers will match.

In general, that means that A above middle C has a frequency of 440Hz, or A=440. Some orchestras tune higher, some historic instruments tune lower. And sometimes an older piano is not able to “hold tune” at concert pitch and it must be tuned “to itself.”

I am prepared to tune to the standards of recording studios, concert venues, and homes in whatever tuning works best for you and for your piano.

There are claims that A=432 give special healing powers to music, please read here to understand why this is false.