

Caring for Your Restored Piano

Your warranty does not cover routine maintenance such as tuning, action regulation and tone regulation, unless been agreed as part of the restoration package. It does protect you against defects in materials or workmanship for 5 full years. Your best guarantee of long-term satisfaction from your restored piano performance will be your continuing care of the instrument, as recommended in this section.

General Instructions

In normal circumstances, the exterior of the piano is easy to keep clean. A piece of clean cheesecloth, lightly dampened with Steinway Furniture Care's Cleanse and Condition, is a safe product to use for wiping away dust and finger marks. Wax should NEVER be used on your restored piano finish, If you have used wax on your piano, Cleanse and Condition will also safely remove the wax buildup. Using wax on the surface is not recommended. Always wipe with the grain, as this is the direction in which the piano was originally polished before leaving our workshop. Always wipe the surface in a straight line, never with a circular motion, as this will eventually cause the surface to lose its lustre. A piano should always be wiped in the direction in which it was originally polished. This direction will be obvious when you look at the surface carefully.

Do not use solvents of any kind to clean either the black or white keys. Solvents can ruin the finish of the keys. Use only a clean piece of cheesecloth, lightly dampened, to wipe the keys. Be very careful that dampness does not seep between the keys or down into the keybed. Dampness in the keybed can cause swelling and hamper the free play of the keys. Do not put pots, vases, pictures, drinks or objects of any kind on top of the piano. The finish can be damaged by any foreign objects placed upon it and, in addition, they can have a detrimental effect on the sound of the piano.

Care of the Piano's Interior



Before Piano Repolishing

Faded, cracked and water damaged piano needing complete repolishing.



After Piano Repolishing

Completed piano in Mahogany stain and french polish.

Repolishing Piano

Above piano was the worse example we have photographed so far. In Ronald Ware's over 50 years experience in pianos he has seen many horrific sites.

With this site we will in time place a little shop of piano horrors here, of before and after shots of other badly damaged pianos.

Past Clients

BBC Radio 4

Bedales School

The interior of your piano should be out of bounds to you and your family. Any dealings with your piano's interior should be handled by Westminster Pianos. Often there is a settling in period on newly refurbished pianos of up to 12 months and these technical aspects are expected and dealt with free of charge, regarding tuning and regulation, but not misuse or adverse environments.

Maintaining : Tuning Voicing and Regulating

Routine service is part of piano ownership and you should consider it no more unusual than the maintenance program you would have for an automobile, boat, or airplane you might own.

There are three basic steps in maintaining the sound of your piano: tuning, which brings the piano back to pitch: voicing, which affects the piano's tone, or quality of sound: and regulating, which is adjustment of the action mechanism and affects the touch of the piano.

These three steps, tuning, voicing and regulating, are exacting jobs which consumed many weeks during the final stage of restoring your piano. They should be performed again at intervals recommended in this section. The three adjustments are customarily performed by the same technician and a brief discussion of each should help you better understand what is needed, when, and why.

Tuning

Your restored piano was tuned many times before it left our workshop. It was tuned to and should be maintained at a 440 pitch. Unfortunately, no matter how expertly a piano is tuned, atmospheric variations, particularly humidity, and the nature of the piano's construction constantly conspire to bring it off pitch. We recommend that you have your restored piano tuned at least 3 or 4 times a year. You, however, are the final judge and should have the piano tuned as often as you think necessary. To put the matter of tuning into perspective, remember that a concert piano is tuned before every performance and a piano in a professional recording studio, where it is in constant use, is tuned 3 or 4 times each week as a matter of course. Tuning is an art practiced by skilled professionals and under no circumstances should anyone other than a professional be allowed to try to tune your Steinway piano.

Voicing

While a Steinway piano is tuned to a 440 pitch (New York) or 443 pitch (Hamburg), these are the absolute reference points, voicing is to some extent a matter of preference. Some pianists prefer "bright" voicing while others prefer a mellower sound. Regardless of its original voicing, every piano will acquire a somewhat brighter tone with time, because the hammer felts will be compacted as they are thrown repeatedly against the strings.

Therefore, depending on your taste and the amount of use your piano gets, it ought to be voiced when your ear tells you the time has come. Experience has taught us that a piano which receives normal use in the home will need to be voiced every 2 or 3 years.

In the voicing process the resiliency of the hammer felts is adjusted with

Dorset County Council

Hampshire County Council

West Sussex County Council

Buckinghamshire County Council

Harrow Council

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

special tools and then all notes are balanced so that the tone is uniform throughout the keyboard. This is obviously a job which demands special skills and should be attempted only by a Westminster piano technician.

Action Regulation

In order to keep your restored piano as responsive as it was restored to be, it will from time to time require the attention of a professional piano technician. In normal use the action of your piano will eventually depart from the evenness which was established when it was originally regulated in our factory. The need for regulation is to a certain extent a function of the use which the piano gets.

A piano which gets normal home use will probably need regulation every 2 to 3 years. This is of course subject to individual judgment. Keep in mind that the action of a concert grand is regulated as a matter of routine before every performance.

It goes without saying that tone and action regulation are jobs for a specialist. The two are usually done at the same time. Once again we recommend that you consult us for advice when you think your piano needs to be regulated.

Living with Your Piano

As we have said, common sense is an excellent guide in the care of your restored piano. This is especially true when you are choosing the proper site for the piano in your home.

About 70% of your piano is wood, which even though it has been carefully selected and dried, is still "alive," so to speak. It reacts just as your body does to variations in temperature and humidity. Constant fluctuation in either of these variables is definitely bad for your piano's health, and may lead to more frequent servicing. The action regulation, tuning, and voicing will become unstable.

We urge you to adhere to the following recommendations which will help you minimize wear and tear and help you keep your piano in optimum condition.

Don't position it in the path of an air conditioning outlet or a heating outlet.

Don't put it near an evaporator cooler or a room humidifier.

Don't put it close to an uninsulated outside wall.

If you think of yourself rooted to any of these spots and subjected to the changes of temperature and humidity thereabouts, you will be able to imagine what a piano in the same location would have to endure. Pianos placed in such locations cannot be expected to stay in tune and keep their adjustment. More important, the instrument subjected to such environmental insult may be permanently damaged.

Ideally, your restored piano should reside in a temperate atmosphere

where relative humidity ranges from 45% to 65%. If this is not possible, remember that the idea is to keep environmental factors within a fairly narrow range.

When placing your piano within a room it is important to pick a spot where it will not be hit by direct sunlight. The exterior of your piano is made of wood from the same tree, carefully stained and was color-matched at our workshop. Exposure to direct sunlight will bleach the wood and ruin the piano's carefully prepared finish with in just 6 months.

It is a good idea to place a fairly accurate hygrometer near the piano so you can monitor humidity swings. Room dehumidification, humidification or air-conditioning may be needed to maintain a stable environment. The consideration of these items if necessary far outweigh the increased servicing, which may become necessary if these guidelines are not followed.

Moving Your Piano

Dont!

The cardinal rule of piano-moving is never to try to do it yourself. A professional piano mover should be called for your piano — whether the move is up or down stairs or to a new home.

A grand piano is both heavy and delicately balanced. It simply cannot be regarded as another large piece of furniture. Only professional piano movers have the specialized skills, equipment and experience to do this job.

We recommend that you contact us for the name of a good piano mover in your area.

Disclaimer

Westminster Pianos are not liable or responsible or are legally viable for damage or damages, such as, fading case work, wood shrinkage, inside, action parts, hammer, carriage centres, outside pedal casing, legs, legs being made loose by shrinkage resulting in splitting or loose screws, bolts, or joints, or shrinkage of glues used on legs, pedal box and supports, and veneers.

Westminster Pianos are not liable or responsible or are legally viable for damage or damages, such as, fading case work, due to excess sunlight, heating, fire, water, excessive humidity and or dryness, or and misuse, or little or no professional maintenance, or can be held liable, or responsible, or are legally viable in the event of other piano tuners, technicians other than Westminster Pianos tuners and technicians maintaining your piano.

Westminster Pianos are not liable or responsible or are legally viable for any kind of injury, loss of limb, or death resulting in misuse of your restored piano, or ignoring the above guidelines. **"Moving Your Piano", "Living with Your Piano", "Care of the Piano's Interior", "General Instructions", "Caring for Your Restored Piano".**

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