

Rob's Piano Room - Module 14 - PDF
What To Practice

Right hand All of the below eventually in all keys, but whatever keys you are working on

A) Scales (major and minor)

in traditional way

starting on different notes, changing directions randomly

in thirds, sixes, also switching between thirds and sixes

in octaves

in patterns - such as:



as well as any patterns you come up with on your own

When transposing to other keys, start with these fingerings, even if it puts your thumb on black keys; after a while your hand will find adjustments.

B) Arpeggios and broken chords

C) Patterns based on triads using approaches and surrounds, such as:



The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing a scale exercise. The first staff shows an ascending scale with triplets of eighth notes (marked '3') and a final quarter note (marked '1'). The second staff shows a descending scale with triplets of eighth notes (marked '3') and a final quarter note (marked '1'). The third and fourth staves show similar exercises with different groupings and fingering, including triplets and single notes marked with '1' and '3'.

When transposing: if thumb not always possible, at least be conscious of ending each set near the lower part of your hand when ascending, and near the top of your hand when descending to give you room to continue in the appropriate direction.

D) Scale shapes and 'padding' (getting to know scale 'geography')

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff illustrates scale shapes using chords, with notes grouped together and connected by lines to show movement up and down the scale. The second staff illustrates 'padding' exercises, where chords are played on consecutive notes of the scale, moving up and down.

These are just examples, make your own shapes from notes of your scale and move them up and down the scale. This could also be done two-handed. As well, rather than just moving the shape up and down the scale, patterns such as up two notes, down one could also be possible.

“Padding” involves patting all ten fingers down on consecutive notes of the scale, then moving this up and down the scale.

Left Hand

A) Triads and four note chords

B) Arpeggios, and broken chords in various patterns, for example:



C) Accompaniment patterns from Module 7 including

basic accompaniment figure

using different inversions

using different bass notes

lower bass or active bass (try practicing with eyes closed)

arpeggiated, plus bass note+ arpeggio figures

(Try these on single chords as well as in progressions)

Right Hand and Hands Together Vocabulary Material

A) Right hand melodic ideas (one chord or based on a progression)

Taken from repertoire and pre-existing material, or created by you

In order to transpose, you will need to analyze, in terms of intervals, or perhaps in terms of scale degrees, approaches and non chord tones, etc. The understanding created by this analysis is one of the great side benefits of the exercise of transposing.



For example, this melodic fragment is composed of the 1,3,5 of the triad, an upper neighbour back to the fifth then to the high root, and passing tones down the scale to the fifth. Use this information to find it in other keys.

B) melodic ideas with accompaniment

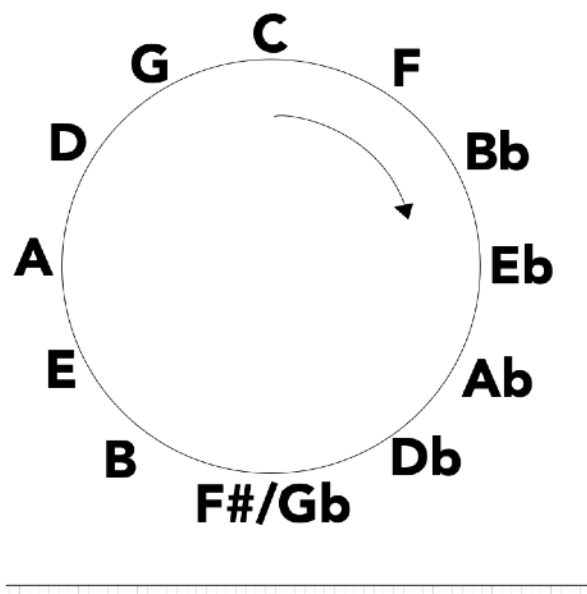
Take a short melodic idea, and add an accompaniment, practice until comfortable, and try in different keys, analyzing as above

For example, analyze the above hands separately, practice hands separately and hands together, and eventually try in different keys. This is only an example, so try with your own material, or you could start by modifying the above to make it your own. You can also try your ideas in octaves, filling in octaves, and 3rds/6ths

When practicing in different keys, try to be exact in your transposition. You may end up modifying slightly from key to key, but when doing this sort of practice transposing exactly will keep you from sticking to habits.

- C) Practice through chord progressions, first left hand only, then adding a melody, perhaps sometimes out of time in order to experiment freely, then in a temp and time signature. Be patient and allow yourself time to work out ideas

The Circle of Fourths



The circle of fourths (which is also the circle of fifths, going in the other direction) is an organized way of playing all 12 notes of the scale without repeating.

It is often used as a practice tool, simply by transposing material in this order. This material may be a single chord, a short melodic idea, or something longer. For example, we may practice the C triad in inversions, then the F triad with inversions, then Bb, then Eb , and so on around the cycle. This is useful as chords very often move in this order anyway (all V-I and ii-V-I progressions move in this order). As well, this forces you to have and reset your hand each time, as opposed to just moving up in semitones.

You may find that practicing though the whole cycle might be too much for you at the moment perhaps just use part of the cycle, such as G,C,F,Bb for now and add one at a time as you become comfortable, at your own pace.