

# Sports & Piano

A Renovative Way to Teach Piano Techniques for  
Intermediate Students Through Excerpts

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# Preface

## Introduction

Analogies are powerful tools in music education, offering vivid and relatable explanations for technical or musical concepts. A well-chosen analogy can save significant time in piano teaching by providing students with clear mental images and connections in a fun, engaging way, especially for young students.

Piano playing, like sports, relies on precise muscle usage, timing, and coordination. Many motions required in piano technique closely parallel movements in sports. Drawing on these similarities, this project will present analogies between common piano techniques and sports actions, such as pole vaulting, ice-skating, swimming, etc.

This project aims to create an innovative way for intermediate piano students that uses analogies from sports to teach piano techniques effectively.

## Content

The project will include a **textbook** for classroom use, and **tutorial videos** for teacher reference.

The textbook will cover eight topics, each focused on fundamental techniques commonly encountered in piano playing (e.g., circular wrist motion, forearm rotation) and their application to specific musical textures (e.g., two-note slurs, octaves, large intervals). Every topic will include 3-5 carefully selected intermediate-level classical repertoire excerpts to provide students with practical applications and reinforce the concepts.

To support teachers in implementing this approach, the project will also include tutorial videos for each topic. These concise videos will:

- Explain the technique focus of each topic;
- Offer suggested teaching sequences for optimal learning;
- Include demonstrations of the technique in action.

## Applicability

The textbook is designed for intermediate piano students who have acquired a basic understanding of music notation. The excerpts align with Levels 3 to 7 of the *Celebration Series*® by The Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM).

## Pedagogical Principles of Piano Playing in This Project

### 1. Bigger Motion

- **Principle:** Engage larger muscle groups (wrist, arm, shoulder, and upper body) rather than relying solely on finger movements.
- **Reason:** Fingers contain no muscles themselves; generating motion from larger body parts makes playing easier, and helps prevent injury.

### 2. Never-Freezing

- **Principle:** Maintain continuous, fluid motion, even during rests, held notes, or between notes.
- **Application:** Connect musical phrases through well-coordinated physical gestures (e.g., transforming isolated notes into a bigger unified motion).

### 3. Diversity of Repertoire






- **Principle:** Expose students to varied styles from the earliest stages.
- **Scope Includes:**
  - **Historical Periods:** Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist, 20th-century, and Contemporary.
  - **Composers:** Standard canon + underrepresented voices (American contemporary, Asian, women composers, etc.).
  - **Textures & Styles:** Homophonic, polyphonic, tonal, and atonal music.




## Goal

The primary goal of the project is to prepare intermediate-level piano students with strong technical foundations, enabling them to approach advanced repertoire with confidence and skill.

This textbook and accompanying videos aim to enhance piano instruction for teachers by combining creative teaching strategies with practical resources, making piano technique more accessible and engaging for students.

## Topic Overview

No.	Category	Piano Technique	Sport	Picture	Piano Textures	Tutorial Video Link
1	Wrist	Drop & Roll (Vertical Motion)	Pole vaulting		Two-note slur	<a href="https://youtu.be/8BAAqif74VU">https://youtu.be/8BAAqif74VU</a>
2		Lateral Motion	Ice skating		Large Interval	<a href="https://youtu.be/Rstzkj9_pVE">https://youtu.be/Rstzkj9_pVE</a>
3		Circular Motion	Swimming		Ascending/Descending note	<a href="https://youtu.be/BtsT76Xwaxs">https://youtu.be/BtsT76Xwaxs</a>
4		Hanging & Bouncing Wrist	Bouncing a Basketball		Octaves or Repeating Intervals	<a href="https://youtu.be/LJ9iELsNwaU">https://youtu.be/LJ9iELsNwaU</a>
5	Arm	Arm Weight	Diving		Legato & Singing Melody	<a href="https://youtu.be/_ldRjn2lxYg">https://youtu.be/_ldRjn2lxYg</a>

6		Forearm Sliding	Fencing		Accentuated Staccato	<a href="https://youtu.be/nCVggoWpJWo">https://youtu.be/nCVggoWpJWo</a>
7		Forearm Rotation	Spinning a Ping-pong		Alberti Bass, Trill Tremolo	<a href="https://youtu.be/BldMtwUiY3g">https://youtu.be/BldMtwUiY3g</a>
8	Coordination	Unceasing Motion	Passing the Baton		Hand-alternating Passages	<a href="https://youtu.be/Y1z3L0vvrGI">https://youtu.be/Y1z3L0vvrGI</a>

- Tutorial Video YouTube Playlist:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGxzn3Jv3Ze8HIFo-ko3lzx7p49G69y2V>

# 1. Pole vaulting

Wrist: Drop & Roll (Vertical Motion)



Example a.

*Moderato*

(Beethoven: Sonatina in G major, Anh. 5, 1st mvt.)

Example b.

(Gennari Karganov: Für die Jugend, Op.21, No. 5, "Scherzino")

Example c.

*Allegretto*

(Clementi: Sonata in G major, 1<sup>st</sup> Mvt.)

Example d.

un poco agitato

*p*

(Burgmüller: Etude Op. 100, No. 9 "La Chasse")

Example e.

*f*

(Bach: Musette in D Major)

## 2. Ice skating

Wrist: Lateral Motion



Example a.

MODERATO CANTABILE:



(Nicanor Abelardo: First Nocturne)

Example b.



(Mongolian Serenade, Traditional Chinese Folk Song, Arr. Yaonian Gong)

Example c.

Andante (♩ = 84)

4. *p espress.*

(Burgmüller: 12 Études Op. 105, No. 4 "La Campanella")

Example d.

Allegretto ma non troppo

(Debussy: Suite Bergamasque, No. 4, "Passepied")



## Example c.



(Czerny: *Practical Exercises for Beginners*, Op. 599, No. 60)

## Example d.

*Allegretto* *sempre legato ed egualmente* (1813—1888)

(Heller: *25 Etudes mélodiques*, Op. 45, No. 1, "The Brook")

## 4. Bouncing a Basketball

Wrist: Hanging & Bouncing



*Example a.*



(Burgmüller: Etude Op. 100, No. 23 "Le Retour")

*Example b.*



(Bartók: Mikrokosmos, Sz. 107, Vol. 1, No. 112, "Variations on a Folk Tune")

## Example c.

The musical score for Example c consists of two systems. The first system is a piano introduction in E-flat major, featuring a treble and bass staff with a key signature of three flats. The second system is a minuet in E-flat major, also in 3/4 time, with a treble and bass staff. The minuet begins with a half rest in the treble and a half note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.

(Beethoven: Minuet in E-flat Major, WoO 82)

## Example d.

The musical score for Example d consists of two systems. The first system is a piano introduction in G major, featuring a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The tempo is marked "Tempo di Valse." and the dynamics are "PIANO." and "f". The second system is a Spanish Waltz in G major, also in 3/4 time, with a treble and bass staff. The waltz begins with a half rest in the treble and a half note in the bass, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The tempo is marked "rit." and the dynamics are "f".

(Adolf Schneider: Spanish Waltz, Op.70)

## 5. Diving

Arm: Arm Weight



Example a.

A musical score for piano, consisting of two systems. The first system is marked 'Lento.' and 'mf espr.' with a tempo of 3/4. The second system continues the piece. The score is for 'The Sick Doll' from Tchaikovsky's Album for the Young, Op. 39, No. 7.

(Tchaikovsky: Album for the Young, Op. 39, No. 7, "The Sick Doll")

Example b.

A musical score for piano, consisting of two systems. The first system is marked 'Allegretto' and 'dolce' with a tempo of 3/4. The second system continues the piece. The score is for 'Promenade' from Prokofiev's Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 2.

(Prokofiev: Music for Children, Op. 65, No. 2, "Promenade")

## Example c.

Andante sostenuto

The score is for a piano piece in 4/4 time, marked 'Andante sostenuto'. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system shows the right hand with a series of chords and a melodic line, and the left hand with a steady bass line. The second system continues the piece with more complex chordal textures and a melodic phrase in the right hand. The tempo and mood are indicated by the 'Andante sostenuto' marking.

(Khachaturian: Children's Album, Book 2, No. 7, "Funeral Procession")

## Example d.

Lento M. M. ♩ = 52

The score is for a piano piece in 2/4 time, marked 'Lento M. M. ♩ = 52'. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system shows the right hand with a series of chords and a melodic line, and the left hand with a steady bass line. The second system continues the piece with more complex chordal textures and a melodic phrase in the right hand. The tempo and mood are indicated by the 'Lento M. M. ♩ = 52' marking.

(Vladimir Rebikov: Silhouettes, Op.31, No. 9, "The Witch in the Forest")

## Example e.

Allegro, ♩ = 144

The score is for a piano piece in 4/4 time, marked 'Allegro, ♩ = 144'. It features a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first system shows the right hand with a series of chords and a melodic line, and the left hand with a steady bass line. The second system continues the piece with more complex chordal textures and a melodic phrase in the right hand. The tempo and mood are indicated by the 'Allegro, ♩ = 144' marking.

(Bartók: Mikrokosmos, Sz.107, Vol. 1, No. 105, "Games (with two five-tone scales)")

## 6. Fencing

Arm: Forearm Sliding (/poking)



*Example a.*

The musical score for Example a consists of three systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a treble and bass staff. The second system features a violin part with a treble staff and a piano accompaniment with a bass staff. The third system continues the violin and piano parts. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

(Ludvig Schytte: 25 Modern Etudes, Op. 68, No.9)

*Example b.*

The musical score for Example b consists of two systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a treble and bass staff. The second system features a violin part with a treble staff and a piano accompaniment with a bass staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

(Schumann: Album for the Young, Op. 68, No. 29, "Fremder Mann")

## Example c.

*Allegro vivo.*

*ff marcato*

*dim.*

*f*

(Czerny: 125 Exercises for Passage Playing, Op. 261, No. 58)

## Example d.

*Più mosso, ♩ : 184*

*f*

*sim.*

*CRASC.*

(Bartók: Mikrokosmos, Sz. 107, Vol. 4, No. 102, "Harmonics")

## 7. Spinning a Ping-pong

Arm: Forearm Rotating



Example a.

 Musical score for Example a, consisting of two systems. The first system starts at measure 38 and the second at measure 41. Both systems feature a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a continuous eighth-note melody, while the bass staff has a simpler accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.
 

(Clementi: Piano Sonatina in F Major, Op. 36, No. 4, I: Con spirito)

Example b.

 Musical score for Example b, consisting of two systems. The first system starts at measure 1 and the second at measure 4. Both systems feature a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a melody with some rests, and the bass staff has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. Performance markings include 'Andante', 'p dolce', and 'legato'.
 

(Mozart: Piano Sonata No.16 in C major, K.545, II: Andante)

## Example c.

13. Allegro  $\text{♩} = 152$   
*pp agitato*

(Burgmüller: Etude Op. 100, No. 13 "Consolation")

## Example d.

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

(Khachaturian: Album for Children, Book 1, No. 9, "March of the Cavaliers")

## Example e.

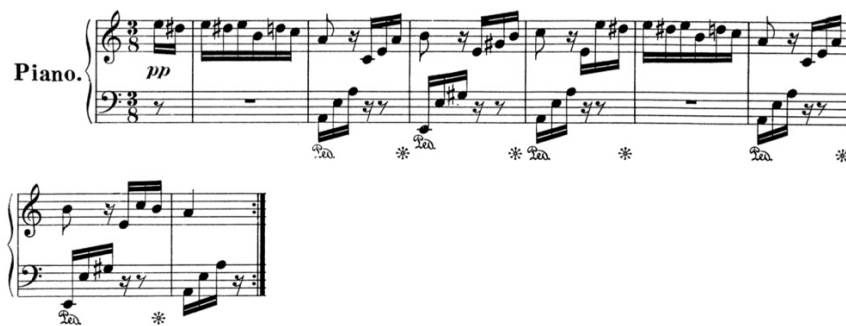
(Liszt: Nuages gris, S. 199)

## 8. Passing a Baton

Coordination: Unceasing Motion



Example a.



(Beethoven: Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor, "Für Elise")

Example b.



(Ann Crosby Gaudet: The Stormy Sea)

## Example c.

Allegro moderato  $\text{♩} = 162$

21. *p armonioso*

*cresc.*

(Burgmüller: Etude Op. 100, No. 21 "L'Harmonie des Anges")

## Example d.

Ad lib.

*p*

*L.H.*

(Liuyang River; Traditional Chinese Folk Song, Arr. Mary Gossell & Shenwei Geng)

## Example e.

8

*p*

57

*pp*

*dim. e*

63

*perdendo*

*ppp*

(Liszt: In festo transfigurationis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, S188)