

Whether you choose a

Piano

or

Electronic Keyboard



You need an INSTRUMENT to take piano lessons,

and a METRONOME to keep time.



It is not feasible to start piano lessons without an instrument. Students need a piano or electronic keyboard at home to practice every day. Twenty minutes once a day is much more effective than say, 6 hours of cramming on the weekend.

## PIANO

If you have a piano, it's assumed you also have a bench. You will also need a [metronome](#) (see below). You can start lessons without having a metronome, but eventually you will need to acquire one. The older the student, the sooner one will be needed.

If you have a piano, you should maintain it by hiring a professional piano tuner to tune it regularly. Approximately once a year is a good idea though this interval will vary from a few months to two years depending on personal preferences, weather conditions, financial means, etc.

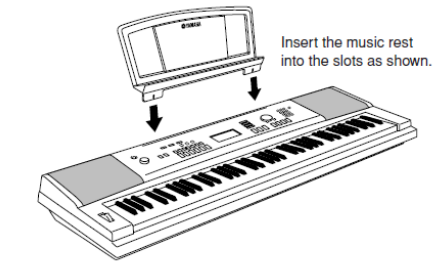
## ELECTRONIC KEYBOARD

There are two types of electronic keyboards: digital pianos and synthesizers.

Digital Pianos have weighted keys to simulate the key action of a piano. They often include several keyboard sounds such as grand piano, honky tonk piano, harpsichord, etc. Synthesizers generally don't have weighted keys, and they include a wide range of sounds beyond traditional keyboard sounds such as strings instruments, woodwinds, brass, percussion, electronic sounds, etc.

One advantage of a weighted keyboard is that it helps build finger strength to play the weighted keys of a real piano. However, an advantage non-weighted keyboards is that it is easier to play fast passages, and these instruments often are lighter than weighted keyboards. This makes them more portable than digital pianos.

Whatever type of keyboard you choose, it's important to make sure you get one with the following features and accessories.

Keyboard Feature	Description
Full Size Keys	You want a keyboard that has "full size keys" which are the same size keys you find on a piano. Do not buy a keyboard with "mini sized" keys.
76 to 88	A piano has 88 keys. An electronic keyboard with 88 keys in preferable, but you can make due with 76 keys – no less.
Touch Sensitivity	A keyboard with touch sensitivity enables you to simulate soft ( <i>piano</i> ) to loud ( <i>forte</i> ) sounds with a single key.
Sustain Jack	You will need a keyboard that will accept a keyboard sustain pedal to simulate the sound of a piano sustain pedal. (See <i>Accessory</i> list below.)
Music Rest	<p>Keyboards come with a music rest that is often detachable.</p> <p>If you are buying a used keyboard, be sure the music rest is included. It is a crucial part of the keyboard and sometimes gets lost over time.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>● Music Rest</p>  </div>

Keyboard Accessories	Description
Keyboard Stand	<p><b>Required.</b></p> <p>You can spend a little or spend a lot and you usually get what you pay for. Caution: don't scrimp when it comes to bench comfort. You don't want sitting discomfort to be the limiting factor in practice time.</p> <div> </div>
Bench	
Sustain Pedal	
Headphones or Ear Buds	<p><b>Optional.</b></p> <p>If the student lives with other people, such as family or roommates, I <i>highly</i> recommend a comfortable pair of headphones so you can do your "woodshedding" without driving the ohana crazy with repetitive sounds.</p> <div> </div> <div> <p><u>woodshedding</u> - verb (used without object), woodshedded, woodshedding. Slang. to practice a musical instrument assiduously and with a specific goal in mind (example: <i>He's woodshedding for next week's show.</i>)</p> </div> <div> <p>It comes from the idea of a musician going out to the woodshed to practice riffs over and over and over w/o bothering the people in the house. Fortunately, electronic keyboards are an excellent way for keyboard players to woodshed in their own living rooms while a roommate watches TV.</p> </div>

There are many digital pianos and keyboard synthesizers on the market. Here's one you can use as a basis of comparison. For approximately \$250 you can get a new Alesis Recital 88-Key Beginner **Digital Piano** with Full-Size Semi-Weighted Keys packaged with a bench and sustain pedal from Amazon.com or other retailer (as of March 2017). You might be able to find this model, or other suitable keyboard, from an Oahu music store.

I recommend that you visit a local music store to see if they have something you like or you can shop online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). You can also look for used keyboards using [craigslist.org](https://www.craigslist.org). If you buy a used keyboard, make sure the AC adapter and the music rest are not missing, and make sure all the keys work.

The link below will help you get you started. This Amazon.com search results on this page show different keyboard stands and leads to links for a sustain pedal and bench.

Search Amazon.com for: [alesis recital keyboard](#)

# METRONOME

A metronome is something that helps beginners learn how to keep a steady beat. A metronome is an essential tool for learning how to play music. It is a substitute for a drum/rhythm section in a band, or a conductor in an orchestra who controls everyone's timing. There are many types of metronomes available.

## **Built Into Electronic Keyboard**

If you have a digital piano or electronic keyboard, a metronome is built in, but you will have to learn how to use it. You can download keyboard manuals from the manufacturer's web site and search for the word "metronome" to find instructions.

## **Phone and Computer Apps**

There are many metronome apps for available for phones, pads, and computers. Search: *metronome*

## **Stand-Alone Electronic**

There are many small, portable electronic metronomes. Some have digital displays that simulate a pendulum, a light that flashes, audio clicks, and the ability to differentiate the downbeat of different time signatures. The disadvantages to these metronomes are that they are too complicated for some users, and require batteries.



## **Mechanical**

During lessons, I like to use the delicate, expensive, mechanical, wind-up type of metronome. It has a loud tick, a visible pendulum, and needs no batteries. Unfortunately, these metronomes are very susceptible to damage. Nonetheless, I think the noticeable pendulum swinging helps players sway to the beat and feel a song's rhythm in with the whole body.

