

## Lesson 8

# Play Without Looking at Your Hand

Copyright © 2017 David Dempster. All rights reserved.

Version 1.0, 20 Apr 2017

# Dear Reader

In today's world, where so much is changing and information is so freely available, I just want to outline your rights and mine with regard to this booklet, which is part of my home study course 'Read & Play Music'.

This is a legally binding agreement between you and myself (David Dempster). Please read it carefully.

This is a multimedia home study course which contains lessons, audios, videos, and documents – all in digital format. Unlike printed books and music where you own the physical book, the standard for digital works is to purchase a licence to use the media.

You have purchased a Group User Licence. This means the course materials will be used only by members of your group, such as a choir, a school music class or a community study group. This licence is intended for a group of up to 20 members. If you have a larger group, please purchase multiple licences.

Terms of Group User Licence	
	
Your group members <u>may</u> :	Your group members <u>may not</u> :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>STUDY</b> the course materials online.</li><li>• <b>DOWNLOAD</b> the course materials and read them on their personal computers or other devices.</li><li>• <b>PRINT</b> the course materials from downloaded files, up to one copy per group member, for their personal use.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Resell, lend or give away your course login, any downloaded course files, or any printed course materials.</b></li><li>• <b>Print additional copies of the course materials.</b></li></ul>

Thank you for respecting my intellectual property rights.

  
David Dempster

<b>Course</b>	<b>Read &amp; Play Music</b>
<b>Book 1</b>	<b>Read and Play Simple Tunes</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Pitch</b>
<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Play Without Looking at Your Hand</b>

# CONTENTS

**LESSON 8: Play Without Looking at Your Hand** ..... 1

**Review**..... 2

**Music Theory** ..... 4

**Practical**..... 6

    Exercise 1: 5-finger position..... 6

    Exercise 2: Reach up to A ..... 8

    Exercise 3: Reach up to B ..... 10

    Exercise 4: Reach up to A and B ..... 11

    Exercise 5: Reach down to D..... 12

    Exercise 6: Reach down to C ..... 13

    Exercise 7: Reach down to C and D..... 14

    Exercise 8: Hand moves into new 5-finger position..... 15

    Exercise 9: Hand moves into two new 5-finger positions ..... 16

    Exercise 10: 2nd finger reaches up to E..... 17

    Exercise 11: Hand scrunched then spread ..... 18

    Exercise 12: Hand spread even more ..... 19

    Chat with David: The pleasure of competence ..... 20

    Tune 1: A rousing Christmas Carol..... 20

    Tune 2: A traditional Scottish song..... 22



## LESSON 8:

# PLAY WITHOUT LOOKING AT YOUR HAND

In the last lesson, you learned to play using all your fingers. That was a big step up in your skill.

Now we're going to build on that and take your reading and playing up to another whole new level.

Many students go their whole life playing the piano without ever gaining the skill you're about to acquire right now.

First, a short review to make sure you're reading and playing 7 notes easily before you go on to take this new step.

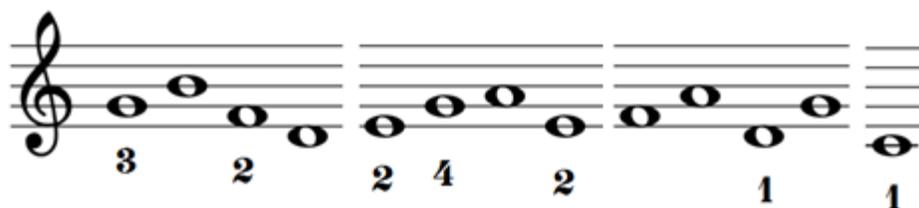
# REVIEW

## SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO

This is a review of what you learned in *Lesson 7: Play Using All Your Fingers*.

Let's make sure you can do all this well before you go on.

**STEP 1: CALL OUT THE NAMES** of these notes (see answers below):



**STEP 2: READ AND PLAY** the notes above, **using the fingering shown**.

**Answer to STEP 1:** GBFD EGAE FADG C

**Answer to STEP 2:** If you'd like to check the accuracy of what you played, you can compare it to an audio recording:



Click the blue box above,  
or find the audio on your Book 1 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

How did that go?

If you had any trouble with it, do a bit more work on the exercises of *Lesson 7* or earlier.

If you did fine, carry on.

# MUSIC THEORY

## BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You may be realizing by now that with fingering, you can play at a whole new level.

Use of fingering also opens the door to another huge step forward: *the ability to play without looking at your hand.*

Watch this video now to see the impact that will have on your playing:



Click the blue box above,  
or find the video on your Book 1 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

## Summary of video

When a student starts playing a new exercise or tune, he may need to keep looking down to see where his hand is on the keyboard and find the next key to play.

That makes your playing slow and hesitant.

You'll play much better if you learn to play without looking down at your hand. That means you'll be able to keep reading the music and playing it without the interruption of looking down. The result is that you'll play more musically and make faster progress.

And it's not difficult to learn this skill. Just keep repeating the exercise or tune, looking down less each time, until you can play it all the way through while looking at the printed music.

Here are some exercises to help you develop this new skill.

# PRACTICAL

## BUILD YOUR SKILL

### Exercise 1:

### 5-finger position

Let's start with the situation that is easiest for playing without looking at your hand. That's when the music fits within a 5-finger position so you don't need to move your hand around at all.

#### **1** Place your hand

1. **PLACE** your right hand in a 5-figure position, with your thumb on middle C and your little finger on G.



## 2 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your right hand as needed in order to play the correct notes. You may find you don't need to look down as your hand doesn't have to move around.



## 3 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

## 4 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it. You are developing the ability to *sight read*.

**Definition:** **sight reading** means reading a piece of printed music you've never seen before, and playing it as you're reading it.

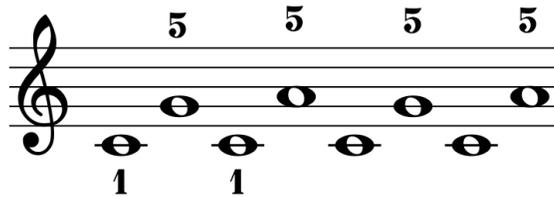
## Exercise 2: Reach up to A

When you play middle C with your right thumb, you'll find your middle finger naturally rests on the G key, like it did in the last exercise. But sometimes you'll need to reach up to play A.

This exercise will help your hand learn the difference between playing C+G, and playing C+A. By doing this, you are developing your muscle memory.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed in order to play the correct notes. Your little finger has to play alternately G and A, so it has to learn how far to reach for G and how far to reach for A.

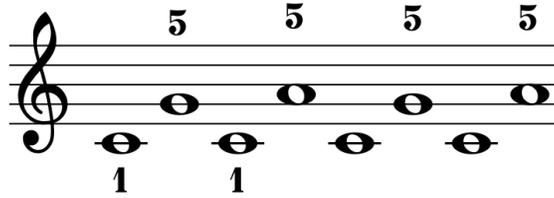


### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it. Here's the music again:

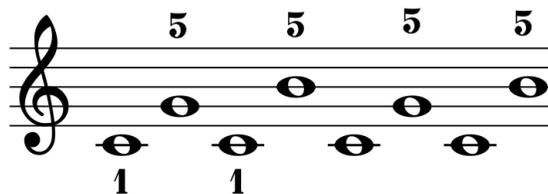


## Exercise 3: Reach up to B

In the last exercise, you trained your little finger to reach up to play A. In this exercise, you'll train it to reach a bit further to play B.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed in order to play the correct notes. Your little finger has to play alternately G and B, so it has to learn how far to reach for B.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

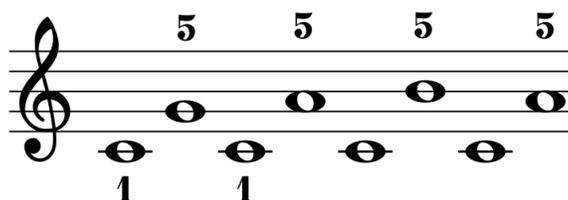
1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 4: Reach up to A and B

Now that your little finger knows how to play G, A and B, let's mix them up to add some challenge.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

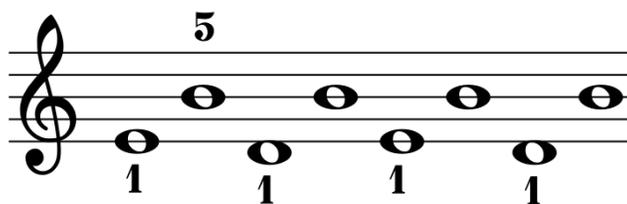
1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 5: Reach down to D

You've been training your little finger to reach up for various notes. Now we're going to train your thumb to reach down.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed. Your thumb will learn how to play E or reach down further to play D.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

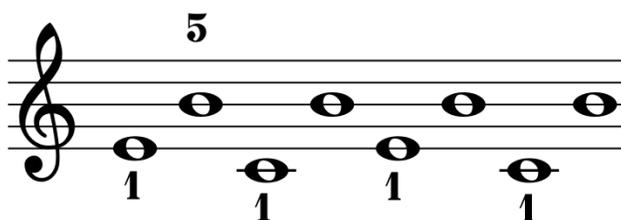
1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 6: Reach down to C

Now your thumb has to reach down further to find middle C.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT**. As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

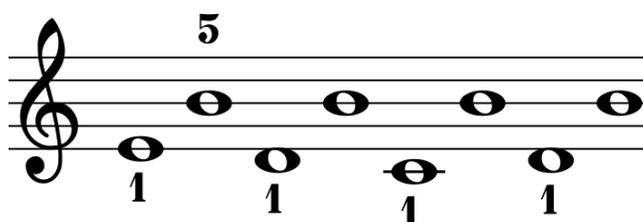
1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 7:

### Reach down to C and D

#### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



#### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

#### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

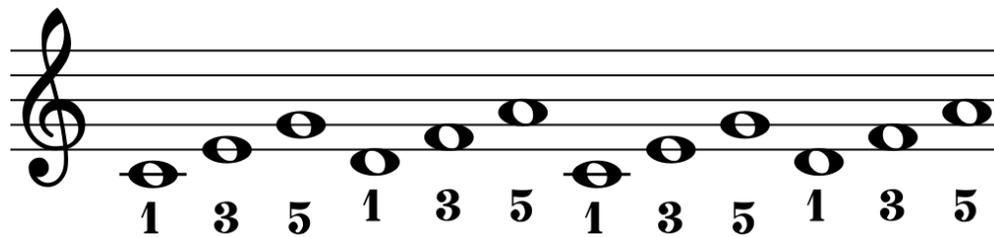
## Exercise 8:

### Hand moves into new 5-finger position

This one is a bit trickier. Take it very slowly at first.

#### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



#### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

#### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

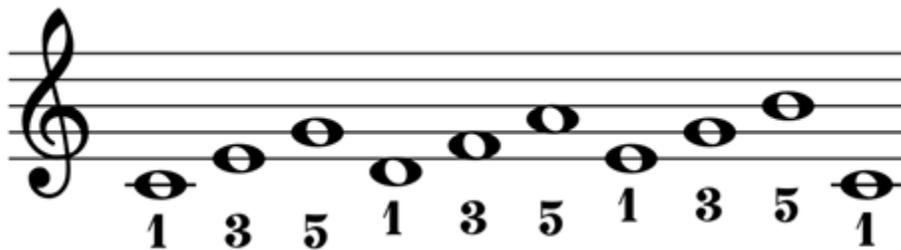
## Exercise 9:

### Hand moves into two new 5-finger positions

Start slowly!

#### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



#### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

#### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

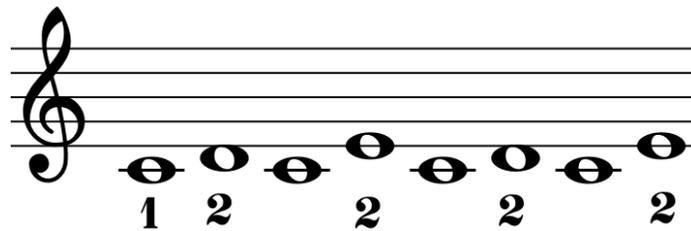
1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 10: 2nd finger reaches up to E

Now your 2nd finger (index finger) has some work to do.

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT**. As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

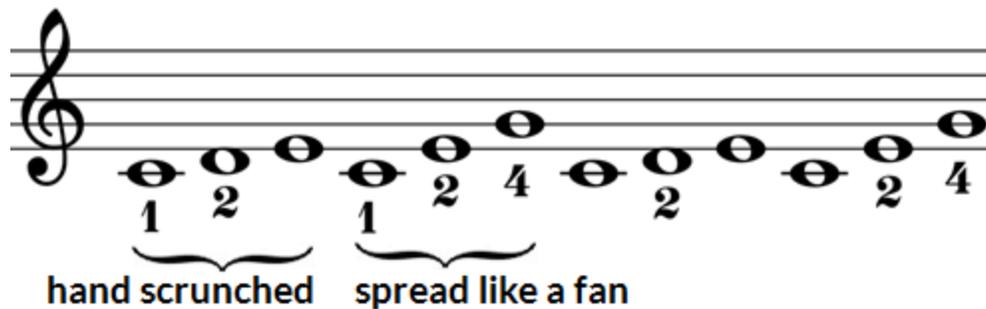
## Exercise 11:

### Hand scrunched then spread

When you play the first 3 notes below, your right hand will be scrunched into a 5-finger position. But when you play the next 3 notes, your hand will spread out like a fan.

#### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



#### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

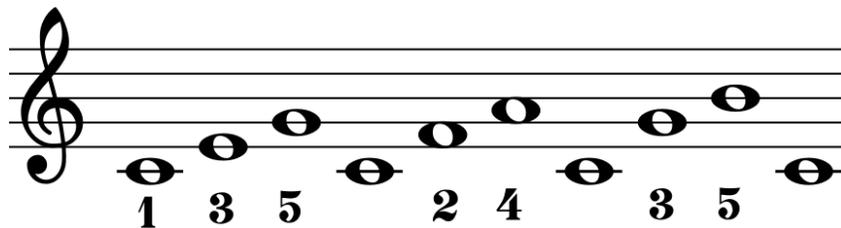
#### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Exercise 12: Hand spread even more

### 1 Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.



### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## Chat with David:

### The pleasure of competence



Wow! You're playing without looking at your hand!

Many pianists never learn this skill. They have to keep looking up at the music and then down to see where their hands are. This slows them down, and besides it doesn't look very professional!

Don't you feel rather proud of the skill you're developing?

You are demonstrating competence, and isn't that one of the great pleasures in life? ■

## Tune 1:

### A rousing Christmas Carol

Again, your little finger and 2nd finger have some stretching to do.

#### **1** Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.

## *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Pause briefly at each of the arrows

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear'. The first staff contains the first line of music, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 1 for G, 5 for A, 2 for Bb, 2 for C, and 3 for Bb. The second staff contains the second line of music, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 1 for G, 5 for A, 2 for Bb, 2 for C, and 2 for Bb. Blue arrows point down to the first note of each line and to the first note of each subsequent phrase.

## 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. **REPEAT.** As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

## 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## By the way ...

Today, when we say ‘carol’, we usually mean a traditional song associated with Christmas.

But in earlier times (900 years ago), it did not yet have a religious connection. The word comes from the French ‘carole’, meaning a circle dance accompanied by singers. Singers sang and dancers danced, and a good time was had by all.

Then, 600 years ago, an English chaplain published a set of ‘caroles of Cristemas’, and the term ‘Christmas carol’ found its way into the English language.

In 1849, a pastor in Massachusetts wrote a rousing carol that we are still singing to this day: ‘It Came Upon a Midnight Clear’.

## Tune 2:

### A traditional Scottish song

Here’s a snippet of another traditional Scottish tune.

In this tune, your little finger has to reach up (note 2) and then your 2nd finger has to reach back down (note 7).

## **1** Play, looking down as needed

1. **PLAY** the music below. Look down at your hand as needed.

## My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

Pause briefly at each of the arrows

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean'. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The first staff has a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 5), B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The second staff has a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 1), A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4 (finger 2), F4, E4, D4, C4. Blue arrows point down to the first and second staves, indicating where to pause. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 5 below the notes.

### 2 Repeat, looking down less and less

1. REPEAT. As you play the music over and over, look down less and less at your hand.

### 3 Play while looking at the printed music

1. Finally, **PLAY** the music without looking down at all. Keep looking at the printed music as you play it.

## What's next

In the last two lessons, you've learned two very important skills that will make you look and sound much better as you read and play music: the use of fingering, and playing without looking at your hand.

Before we get back to learning more new notes, I want to give you a technique I've developed that can greatly speed up your progress.

You see, students sometimes get into trouble because they play with lots of mistakes and get frustrated and feel like they are getting nowhere.

In the next lesson, I'm going to show you a special method I developed for learning to read and play a piece of music. Using this method, you'll play the music correctly right from the first attempt.

Does that sound impossible? Carry on to the next lesson and find out. Make sure you watch the video.

**Go on to your next lesson**



Click the green box above,  
or find Lesson 9 on your Book 1 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)