

Lesson 7

# Read and Play with Two Hands

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<b>Course</b>	<b>Read &amp; Play Music</b>
<b>Book 2</b>	<b>Read and Play Simple Tunes with Two Hands</b>
<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Read and Play with Two Hands</b>

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## LESSON 7:

# READ AND PLAY WITH TWO HANDS

The time has come!

You already had a brief taste of playing with two hands when you did *Lesson 1*.

Now that you are very familiar with 8 bass-clef notes, and you're getting used to playing with your left hand, and you know about left-hand fingering, we can start playing with two hands in earnest.

Playing with two hands may be easier than you think, if you take it step by step. And it is a lot of fun! You'll be surprised at the rich and pleasing sounds you'll be able to make by playing even very simple things with two hands.

I've made it so simple, you'll be delighted when you find you can read and play the tune with two hands at the end of this lesson.

# REVIEW

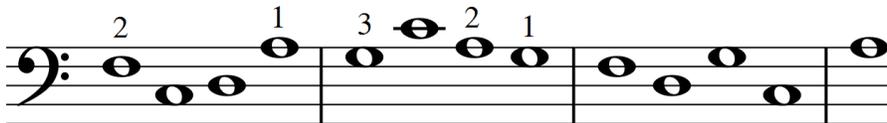
## SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO

Before going on to learn more, it's important that you have a good grasp of what you've already learned. Otherwise you may find it difficult learning the next step.

This is especially true at this point, now that you are about to read and play with two hands!

Do this review. You should be able to do it accurately and easily.

1. **Call out names.** Call out the names of these notes. Don't play them yet.



2. **Play.** Now *play the above notes* on your keyboard.

Did you do that review accurately and easily?

If so, carry on to the next section: 'The grand staff'.

Otherwise, go back and spend more time doing the exercises of earlier lessons before you continue with this new lesson. It will take a bit of time, but you'll make faster progress in the end if you go back now.

**Answers:**

**STEP 1:** FCDA GCAG FDGC A

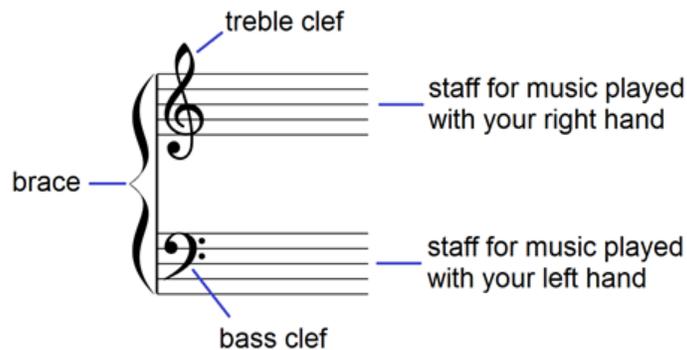


# MUSIC THEORY

## BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Recap: The grand staff

In *Lesson 1*, we saw how music for two hands is printed using the grand staff. Here it is again for reference.



The grand staff.

**Definition:** the **grand staff** (British name: **great stave**) is a pair of staves connected by a brace, used for printing piano music for two hands.

The upper staff shows what you are to play with your right hand, and it usually has a treble clef.

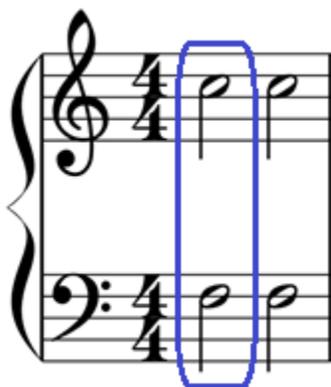
The lower staff shows what you are to play with your left hand, and it usually has a bass clef.

The two staves are joined by a brace to indicate that they are played at the same time on one instrument.

## Recap: the vertical alignment of notes

As we saw in *Lesson 1*, the vertical alignment of the upper notes and lower notes shows how your hands are to coordinate what they are doing. Notes which are vertically aligned (one above the other) are played at the same time.

Here's an example. Look at the music below:



Notice that the first 2 notes are aligned one above the other. So you play them at the same time: lower F with your left hand, and upper C with your right hand. Do that now.

Now notice that the next 2 notes are also vertically aligned:



So you also play those 2 notes at the same time. Do that now.

This was a very simple example. In real music things get much more complex, but the principle still applies:

**notes that are vertically aligned are played at the same time.**

We'll explore that in a moment as we work through the exercises.

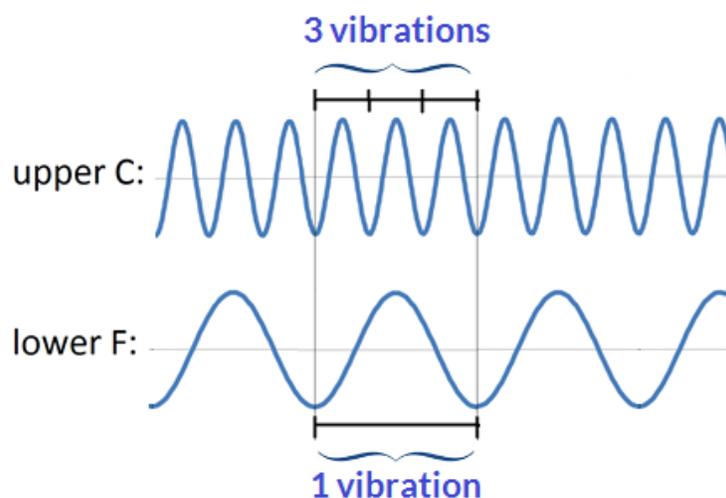
## By the way ...

Play those 2 notes together again:



Don't they sound pleasing?

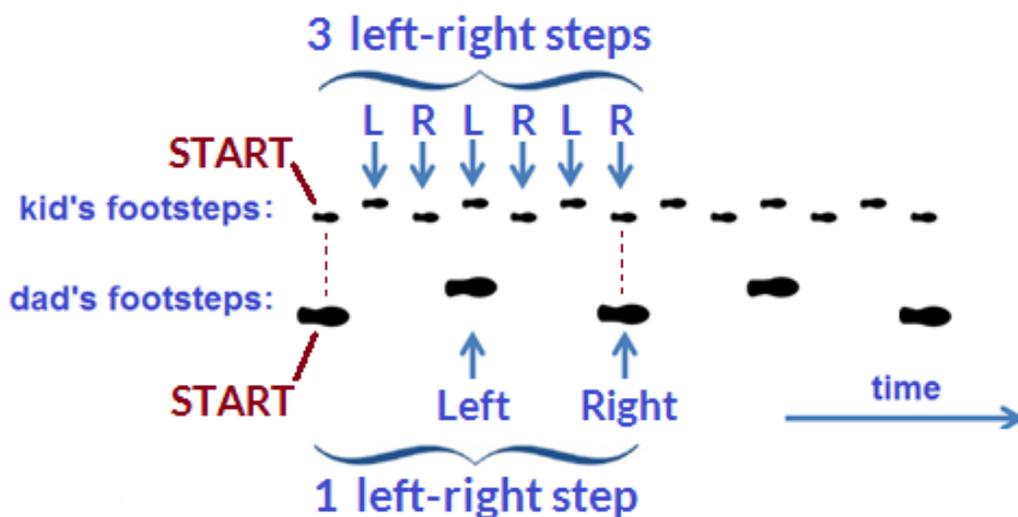
There's a reason why they fit together so well. Do you remember the lesson on vibrations and frequencies (*Lesson 6*) in **Book 1**? A musical note vibrates with a certain frequency. Well, it just happens that the upper C you played with your right hand has a frequency exactly 3 times as fast as the lower F you played with your left hand. That's what makes them sound good together.



Upper C has exactly 3 times the frequency of lower F.

If the high note were 2.99 times the frequency of the low note, or 3.01 times, it would sound bad. That's what is happening when you hear someone playing or singing 'out of tune' or 'off key'.

Do you remember the little kid in **Book 1**, walking next to his dad? He popped up in *Lesson 6: What is a Musical Sound* and in *Lesson 10: Read and Play 10 Notes*. Well, here he is again, but this time he's taking 3 steps for every step his dad takes:



# PRACTICAL

## BUILD YOUR SKILL

Here are a few exercises and a tune for you to play. Then in the next lesson I'll give you a tool you can use to make all of this easier.

### Exercise 1:

## Same timing in both hands

Let's start with the simple example you just saw. I'm giving it to you again so you can go over it a few times to get used to reading and playing with two hands.

### 1 Play

1. **Play** the music below:



2. **Repeat** as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

Make sure to *look at the music* as you play. The purpose of doing this is to start getting used to *reading and playing music from the grand staff*.

## Exercise 2:

### Hands playing different timing

In the previous exercises, your hands both moved at the same time. Now they are going to have to move at different times. Is this fun or what?

#### 1 Play

1. **Play** the music below:



2. **Repeat** as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

Make sure you *look at the music* as you play. I know you can play it without looking, but I want you to practise reading the music as you play.

## Chat with David:

### Yes, this is slow!



I realise you may be finding this excruciatingly slow!

I'm taking it carefully step by step because this is an important new skill you are developing.

Things will soon speed up.

If this seems too easy for you, just read and do each step once and move on. ■

## Exercise 3:

### Busy notes in your left hand

This time your left hand has more to do than your right hand.

#### 1 Play

1. Play the music below:



2. **Repeat** as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

Make sure your two hands play the first note and the last note exactly together.

## Exercise 4: Busy notes in both hands

Both hands have some work to do now.

### 1 Play

1. Play the music below:



2. Repeat as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

## Exercise 5: Varying pitches in your right hand

Up till now, your right hand has always been playing upper C and your left hand has always played lower F. Now you'll play different notes with your right hand.

### 1 Play

1. Play the music below:



2. Repeat as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

## Tune 1:

### A cowboy song

I've written a very simple part for your left hand – just 3 notes. But even this simple accompaniment enhances the tune. Listen to the effect when you play the lower B with your left hand. Your right hand continues playing the same note (upper E), but the mood changes when you play the lower B.

*Red River Valley*

The musical score is for the song "Red River Valley" in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a melody starting on G4, with fingerings 1 and 3 indicated above the first two notes. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment with three notes: a whole rest in the first measure, and B2 in the second and fourth measures. A '1' is written below the first measure of the left hand.

## Exercise 6: Varying pitches in both hands

One more exercise and then you'll play a tune with both hands.

### 1 Play

1. Play the music below:



2. Repeat as needed until you can do it accurately and easily.

## Chat with David:

### Can I really do this?



In *Lesson 1* you played a piece of music with two hands. But I kept the left hand part very simple, with one whole note in each measure.

Real music is not usually like that. The interaction between your hands can become very complex indeed.

You may be wondering, since you only have one brain, ‘How can I read and play complex music with my right hand and with my left hand at the same time? Don’t I need two brains to do that?’

When I learned to drive a car, I went to the testing station to take my test. There were people sitting around waiting nervously. We were all given a booklet to read. It was a friendly little booklet, and one thing it said was, ‘Lots of people have passed their driving test, and you can too.’

That simple piece of wisdom rang a bell for me, and it has been a part of my personal philosophy ever since. I have not learned to fly an aeroplane, but I know I could if I wanted to because other people have done it. I have never learned to walk a tightrope, or juggle ten balls in the air, or play the banjo, but other people have managed to and so could I.

So, lots of people have learned to read and play music with two hands, and you can do it too.

We’re going to take it one step at a time, and it will all work out just fine.

Let’s get to it. ■

## Tune 2:

### Our old favourite, with more challenge for your left hand

When you played this tune with two hands in *Lesson 1*, your left hand only played one note in each measure. Here is a version of the tune which gives your left hand a bit more to do.

**Mary Had a Little Lamb**

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4/4 time. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system is marked with a '3' above the treble clef, indicating a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The second system is marked with a '5' above the treble clef, indicating a quintuplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The bass clef part in both systems provides a more active accompaniment than in Lesson 1, with multiple notes per measure.

Yes, it's a simple tune, but what an accomplishment to read and play music with two hands, when you only have one brain!! Don't you feel a bit like a magician performing a feat of magic?

## What's next?

You're taking on more challenge. It's time to revisit a practice method from **Book 1** that will help you meet the challenge. And we'll see how to give this method a **Book 2** twist.

To find Lesson 8, click the green box:

**Go on to your next lesson**



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