

The Piano Owner's Heads-Up Guide to Important Piano Maintenance

Focus On: Cleaning the Grand Piano Soundboard



Extreme cleaning

The simplest alternative method of cleaning a soundboard is to use a flexible rod with a cleaning cloth attached. This technique allows one to get underneath the strings and dust the soundboard as one would dust the surface of any piece of furniture. Typically, this approach will remove most debris.

For hard to remove grime, several strings on the treble end may be unhooked to allow for a rope and a rag to be drawn under the strings. A person on either side of the piano work the rag back and forth to clean the soundboard thoroughly. (Note the improvement shown in the photos using this method.)

The soundboard of a grand piano over a period of time typically becomes dusty—sometimes to the point where the sound of the piano may be affected. This problem may be lessened if the lid of the piano is kept down when the piano is not in use. If a piano cover or string cover is also used to help keep the soundboard clean, the build-up of dust should be decreased even more. But even when these preventative measures are taken, dust will tend to accumulate on the flat surface of the soundboard given enough time. **The soundboard of your grand piano has become dirty to the point where it should be cleaned.**

If the accumulation of dust and debris is minor the use of a can of compressed air on one side coupled with a vacuum on the other may be enough to clean the surface effectively. On the other hand, if the dust is thick or if it adheres to the soundboard, a more intensive approach may be needed.

