

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

Focus On: Damper Replacement for the Upright Piano

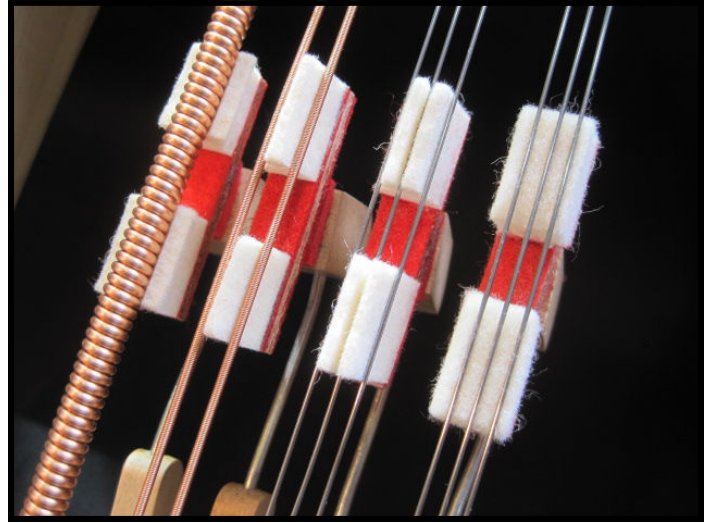


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Dampers are to a piano what brakes are to an automobile. While the action, strings and soundboard of the piano are all devoted to the production of sound, the sole purpose of the dampers is the cessation of sound. The fact that a piano can go from a thunderous crescendo one second to nearly complete silence the next is a testament to the genius of the design of the dampers.

Worn-out dampers will be detectable by what's heard when the piano is played. When the sustain pedal is released, the transition from sound to silence won't be immediate, but will be more prolonged than usual—a symptom of old dampers unable to quickly absorb the energy of the strings.

The dampers on your piano have reached the point in which their effectiveness has been compromised by age. Replacement of the old damper felts of your piano with a set of new high-quality dampers would be the best solution.



The four most commonly used upright dampers are shown in the photo above. The powerful vibration of the longest of the copper wound bass strings (far left in photo) are quieted by single wedge dampers. For the lighter pairs of wound bass strings found further up on the scale, double wedge dampers are used. Plain steel treble strings are either dampened with trichord dampers or flat dampers.

With a new set of dampers such as shown in the photo below, your piano will give more satisfactory performance without the annoyance of ringing keys.



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