

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

## Focus On: Regluing Loose Soundboard Ribs



Information provided courtesy of:

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When the soundboard begins to separate from the ribs, the result can be a loss in tonal quality of the piano, a diminishing in volume and the likelihood of buzzes and rattles developing. The most effective repair of loose ribs requires removing the cast iron plate, along with the pins and strings, (plus the keys, keybed and action) in order to access the soundboard from both front and back.

With the cast iron plate and other parts out of the way, tiny holes are drilled through the ribs and soundboard so that piano wire may be threaded in and out from one side of the soundboard to the other (see above photo). Woodworking glue is then worked into the spaces where ribs are loose.

Split dowels with channels for the piano wire are then placed under each loop of the wire so that when tension is applied, the pressure is spread out and the ribs and soundboard are pulled together (photo at top of opposite column).



As the wires are tightened, glue will squeeze out from the areas being joined (below photo), indicating that the fit is tight and the bond will be secure. The excess glue is carefully cleaned from the edges before it dries.

The glue is allowed to cure overnight at which time the wires are cut, the tension is released, and the holes where the wires were inserted are plugged and sanded. At that time the back of the soundboard, the ribs and the wooden posts may be shellacked to bring back the original beauty of the wood, and to prevent moisture from swelling and drying the wood.



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