How often should my piano be serviced?

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Your piano is an investment in your future. It can bring you and your family a lifetime of music, adding immeasurable joy and beauty to your home. Since it is also such a large investment, it should be maintained with the utmost care. Regular servicing by a qualified technician will preserve your instrument and help you avoid costly repairs in the future.

Because your piano contains materials such as wood and felt, it is subject to change with climatic conditions. Extreme swings from hot to cold or dry to wet cause its materials to swell and contract, affecting tone, pitch, and action response or touch. You can reduce the severity of these effects by placing your piano near a wall away from windows or doors that are opened frequently. Avoid heating and air conditioning vents, fireplaces and areas which receive direct sunlight. Your piano will perform best under consistent conditions neither too wet nor dry, optimally at a temperature of 68 degrees F and 42 percent relative humidity.

While pianos generally fall into vertical and grand model categories, each manufacturer selects its own materials and utilizes its own unique scale and furniture designs. Every piano requires a different level of maintenance, depending upon the quality of materials used and the design and level of craftsmanship. Manufacturers can provide general advice on tuning frequency but your technician can give specific recommendations based upon your usage and locale. Here's what some of the major piano manufacturers recommend:

Baldwin Piano Company

(also Chickering, Wurlitzer)

Professional service is the key. In the first year, the National Piano Manufacturers Association recommends that you have your piano tuned four times. This is a period of environmental adjustment for a new instrument, and proper attention is important.

After the first year, the piano should be tuned at least twice each year, depending upon the frequency of use and atmospheric conditions. Contact the Piano Technicians Guild for a list of qualified technicians to perform this service.

Kawai Piano Company

Quality pianos demand quality care. Fine pianos require regular maintenance in three areas: tuning, action regulation and voicing. Tuning is usually required more often than the other service areas, but all three should be a part of any fine piano's maintenance.

Due to string stretching, settling, and the effects of climate, a new piano should receive at least four tunings in the first year. After that, the type of use and the location of the piano will dictate the number of tunings required, but Kawai recommends two tunings per year as a minimum.

Pearl River

Changes in temperature and humidity, the amount and type of use it gets, and the musical requirements of the owner will determine how often your Pearl River piano will need service.

In general, Pearl River recommends that your new piano be serviced four times the first year and twice a year by a qualified piano technician.

Samick

(also Knabe, Kohler & Campbell, Conover Cable, Bechstein & Sohmer)

The careful selection and installation of the highest quality tuning pins, string, and pinblock materials assures excellent stability. Regular service by a qualified technician will assure the continuing pleasure that comes only from a properly tuned and regulated piano.

We recommend two to three tunings the first year and a minimum of two tunings per year thereafter. Avoid placing your piano where it will be exposed to extreme heat or cold, moisture, or direct sunlight, all of which can cause unstable tuning, warpage, and finish damage.

Schimmel

Your Schimmel piano should be tuned and serviced only by qualified professionals. Questions regarding tuning can best be answered by your local piano technician.

As a rule, a brand new piano should, depending on its location and climatic conditions, be tuned two to three times in the first year or two. An instrument played often and intensively could require additional tunings.

Steinway & Sons

(also Boston & Essex)

Your Steinway piano was tuned many times before it left our factory. It was tuned to and should be maintained at A440 pitch. This is the internationally accepted standard and the standard for which all Steinway pianos are engineered.

Unfortunately, no matter how expertly a piano is tuned, atmospheric variations and the nature of the piano's construction constantly conspire to bring it off pitch.

Your Steinway has been designed and built so that in normal use and under normal conditions it should need only periodic tuning. We recommend that your technician be called at least three or four times a year. You, however, are the final judge and should have the piano tuned as often as you think necessary. To put the matter of tuning into perspective, remember that a concert piano is tuned before every performance, and a piano in a professional recording studio, where it is in constant use, is tuned three or four times each week as a matter of course.

Tuning is an art practiced by skilled professionals and under no circumstances should anyone other than a professional be allowed to tune your Steinway piano.

Yamaha Pianos

New pianos should be tuned a minimum of four times the first year to compensate for the normal settling that takes place. Subsequently, as a matter of standard maintenance, a piano should be tuned at least twice a year.

Of course, some musicians will choose to have their own piano tuned more often to satisfy their own personal musical requirements.

When your piano needs tuning, consult your authorized Yamaha piano dealer or call a skilled qualified specialist such as a Piano Technicians Guild Registered Piano Technician (RPT).

Young Chang America, Inc.

(also Pramberger & Bergmann)

Piano owners will receive optimum performance from their piano if it is properly serviced during its lifetime to compensate for the effects of environmental conditions and use.

Due to the natural elasticity in new piano strings, we recommend that your instrument be tuned two to four times the first year, twice the second year and a minimum of once per year thereafter. Of course, you may choose to have your piano tuned more or less often to satisfy your own personal requirements.

Ask your piano technician to also inspect the action and mechanical parts of your instrument along with regular tunings. Registered Piano Technicians have proven themselves qualified to give advice on the needs of a piano in its specific environment.

Your piano, like those in homes and on stages throughout the world, is an instrument of extraordinary promise which can bring you and your family a lifetime of enjoyment.

To ensure its performance over that lifetime, it is important to have your piano serviced regularly by a qualified professional. Complete piano service should include periodic regulation and voicing in addition to tuning.

Your technician can consult with you to recommend a maintenance schedule customized for your instrument.