

Resources: Acoustic vs. Digital Pianos

You may be debating whether to purchase an acoustic or digital piano. Our piano faculty all agree their ideal preference would be for a traditional acoustic instrument, which responds with an infinite range of volume and tone color, reflecting every nuance of the pianist's most subtle variations in touch and artistry.

However, digital piano technology has improved tremendously over the past decades and many models very nearly replicate the sound and touch of an acoustic instrument. Digital pianos are more compact, requiring less space, and you will be able to achieve a close match to the traditional piano at a lower cost. Choosing a higher end digital piano over a low quality or poor condition acoustic would be well worth consideration.

Pros for the acoustic:

- Superior tone and infinite control of the physical mechanisms producing the sound
- Superior infinite control of pedal effects
- The instrument itself (the “case”) is a beautiful piece of furniture, available in a variety of finishes to match any decor
- Investment value: acoustic instruments will hold their value far better over time and are sometimes handed down from generation to generation, while a digital piano’s value will depreciate quickly, similar to a computer/electronics purchase
- No power source required; even if the piano is in need of tuning or maintenance you will still be able to produce some sound

Pros for the digital:

- Does not require regular tunings or maintenance
- Compact, requires much less space than an acoustic piano
- Easy to move, usually less than 100 pounds
- Ability to use headphones for practice
- Many have features to record and play back, an excellent tool for practice
- Plays sounds other than piano, imitates a wide variety of instruments and sounds
- Most have MIDI interface, allowing connections to the computer and other devices, which can be particularly useful for composing and arranging

Cost Comparison: (cost for new instruments, you can often buy used for far less)

- Acoustic good quality upright: \$3500-\$10,000
- Acoustic good quality grand: \$7500-\$85,000+
- Digital most closely matching an acoustic instrument: \$1000-\$3500+