

Resources: Purchasing an Acoustic Piano

Congratulations! You've made the decision to purchase an acoustic piano. Now what?

Some basics:

- No two pianos sound or feel exactly alike, so it's important that you insist on playing and examining the exact piano you plan to purchase. Don't assume you could order the same model of a piano you liked in a showroom with a different finish and have the same touch and tone.
- If you are purchasing a used piano from an individual, make sure to have a registered piano technician of your choice examine the instrument. You most likely would not buy a used car without having your own mechanic check it over and the same holds true for a major purchase such as a piano.
- Purchasing a used piano from a dealer has the advantages of seeing a variety of choices in one location, some offer delivery and initial tuning services with purchase, and some offer warranties, saving you the trouble of arranging for your own technician to examine the instrument.
- Determine your budget and consider your room size. Pianos tend to sound best when they are not more than one fourth the size of the room. Upright pianos stand vertically while grand pianos are horizontally oriented. In general a grand is preferable to an upright.
- Each piano has a unique personality and while certain brands are known for quality, the ultimate test should be how you feel about the sound, look and feel of the instrument.

Upright (vertical orientation) sizes:

Vertical Upright	49" to 52" tall	Considered the best upright, with soundboard and string length comparable to a baby grand
Studio Upright	45" to 48" tall	Considered a very good upright, comparable to a petite grand
Console Upright	40" to 43" tall	May have either "drop action" or "direct blow action", the "direct blow action" is preferred
Spinnet	35" to 38" tall	Least desirable due to shortness of strings and use of "drop action"

Grand (horizontal orientation) sizes:

Concert Grand	7' to 9'	Most often found in concert halls, theaters, auditoriums, and recording studios
Semiconcert or Ballroom Grand	6'2" to 6' 11"	Common in teaching studios, smaller recital halls, and ballrooms
Parlor Grand	5'9" to 6'1"	Common in homes, good tone quality without overwhelming the room
Medium Grand	5'7" to 5'8"	Larger than the baby grand, good tone quality
Baby Grand	4'11" to 5'6"	Popular choice due to good sound quality, aesthetic appeal and affordability
Petite Grand	4' 5" to 4'10"	Least desirable grand due to short string length and soundboard size, tone quality is sacrificed and the best uprights could be preferable if vertical orientation is an option