



◆ MOORE PIANO SERVICES ◆

Greenwood, South Carolina · Certified Piano Technician

The New Piano *Owner's Guide*

Everything you need to know to care for your
piano in its first year — and for many years after.

Davis L. Moore, CPT · Certified Piano Technician

PTG Member · Certified Piano Life Saver Installer

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Welcome to piano ownership.

Whether your piano is brand new, inherited, or bought secondhand, the choices you make in its first year matter more than almost any other point in its life. This guide covers the essentials — what helps, what hurts, and what to watch for — so your piano sounds its best for decades to come.

I. Humidity Is Your Piano's Greatest Threat

A piano is built almost entirely of wood, felt, and steel wire — materials that respond constantly to moisture in the air. South Carolina's seasonal humidity swings, from sticky summers to dry winters, are one of the most common causes of long-term piano damage. Managing humidity well is the single most impactful thing you can do for your instrument.

✓ DO

Keep your piano away from direct sunlight and exterior walls.

Maintain stable indoor humidity between 38–45% year-round.

Consider a Damp-Chaser humidity control system.

Keep a hygrometer near the piano to monitor levels.

✗ DON'T

Place your piano near a fireplace, vent, or radiator.

Position it against an exterior wall in extreme climates.

Ignore visible warping, sticking keys, or tuning instability.

Use space heaters or window units pointed at the piano.

"The single best investment any SC piano owner can make — before the damage is done." — Davis Moore, CPT

◆ AVAILABLE IN OUR SHOP

- Damp-Chaser Piano Life Saver systems — \$700 (upright) to \$1,500 (grand)
- Digital hygrometers to monitor your piano's environment
- Replacement humidifier pads & pad treatment solution

Browse humidity control products at moorepianoservices.com/shop

II. Where You Put It Matters

Where your piano lives in your home affects its tuning stability, finish, and lifespan just as much as how often it's played.

- ✓ Place it on an interior wall, away from direct sunlight and drafts.
- ✓ Leave a few inches of space between the piano and the wall for airflow.
- ✗ Don't place it near a window, exterior door, or air vent.
- ✗ Don't set drinks, vases, or plants on top of the piano — spills are a leading cause of preventable damage.

III. Cleaning Without Causing Damage

The wrong cleaning products can permanently damage a piano's finish or keys. When in doubt, less is more.

- ✓ Dust regularly with a soft, dry microfiber cloth.
- ✓ Use a barely damp cloth for keys, then dry immediately.
- ✓ Use piano-specific products (like Cory brand) for polishing.
- ✗ Don't use household furniture polish, ammonia, or alcohol-based cleaners.
- ✗ Don't let water sit on keys or cabinet surfaces.

Cory Keybrite, Scratch-Brite, and microfiber cloths are all available in our shop — moorepianoservices.com/shop

IV. How Often to Tune

A new piano — or one that's just moved into your home — needs more frequent attention in its first year as it settles into its new environment.

SITUATION	RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY
First Year (new or moved piano)	Every 3–4 months
Ongoing (established piano)	Twice per year
Lightly played / rarely used	Once per year minimum
Performance / institutional use	Before every performance

V. If You Move the Piano

Pianos are heavy, delicate, and easy to damage when moved incorrectly — even a short move across a room can throw off tuning or cause structural harm.

- ✓ Hire professional piano movers for any move beyond rearranging in the same room.
- ✓ Schedule a tuning 2–3 weeks after any move to let the piano settle.
- ✗ Don't let general movers (not piano specialists) handle your piano.
- ✗ Don't tip a piano on its side or back without professional guidance.

VI. Living With Kids & Pets

A piano can absolutely coexist with an active household — a little awareness goes a long way.

- ✓ Keep the fallboard (key cover) closed when the piano isn't in use.
- ✓ Teach children to play with clean, dry hands.
- ✗ Don't let pets climb, scratch, or sleep on or inside the piano.
- ✗ Don't store food, drinks, or small toys on or near the keys.

VII. Warning Signs to Call a Technician

- A key sticks, feels loose, or doesn't return properly.
- You notice a musty smell, mold, or visible water staining.
- The tone sounds buzzy, rattling, or noticeably uneven between notes.
- It's been more than a year since the last tuning.
- You hear a string buzz or notice visible rust on the strings.
- The piano was recently moved, dropped, or exposed to extreme temperature.

VIII. Building a Seasonal Care Routine

Good piano care isn't a single decision — it's a few small habits repeated through the year. Here's a simple rhythm that keeps most Upstate SC pianos in excellent shape.

Spring <i>Humidity rising</i> Check your Damp-Chaser system and refill with distilled water if needed. Good time for a tuning before summer humidity peaks.	Summer <i>Peak humidity</i> Keep the dehumidifier bar active. Avoid placing window units or fans blowing directly on the piano. Watch for sluggish key action.	Fall <i>Humidity dropping</i> Schedule your second annual tuning. Refill the humidifier reservoir as heating season approaches.	Winter <i>Driest period</i> Run a humidifier in the room if possible. Watch for cracking sounds or visible gaps — signs of excessive dryness.
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IX. Your Piano Care Shopping List

We stock most of what a piano owner needs in one place, so you're not hunting around town. Everything below ships directly or can be picked up at your next service visit.

PRODUCT	PRICE
Damp-Chaser Watering Can	\$30.00
Humidifier Pad Treatment (16 oz)	\$15.00
Humidifier Replacement Pads	\$10.00
Cory Keybrite Key Cleaner & Brightener	From \$5.00
Cory Microfiber Cleaner Cloth	\$7.00
Cory Scratch-Brite Wood Restorer	\$15.00
Adjustable Piano Bench (Benchworld)	From \$229.00
Piano Caster Cups (Set of 3)	From \$38.00

See the full catalog — including lamps, benches, and Damp-Chaser systems — at moorepianoservices.com/shop

X. Understanding Your Piano

A little knowledge of how your piano works helps you understand what a technician is actually doing — and why regular care matters.

Tuning

Adjusting string tension so every note matches standard pitch (A440). Affected constantly by humidity and temperature.

Regulation

Adjusting the mechanical parts of the action so every key responds with the same feel, speed, and depth.

Soundboard

The large wooden panel beneath the strings that amplifies the piano's sound. Highly sensitive to humidity.

Pitch Raise

A larger correction needed when a piano has gone a long time without tuning and has drifted significantly flat or sharp.

Voicing

Shaping the hammer felt to even out tone — correcting notes that sound too bright, harsh, or dull.

Action

The mechanical system of hammers, levers, and springs that translates a key press into a hammer strike.

XI. Frequently Asked Questions

Why does my piano go out of tune if no one plays it?

Humidity changes affect the soundboard and strings constantly, whether the piano is played or not. Tuning instability from climate is normal and expected — it isn't a sign anything is wrong.

Is it bad if my piano was just moved into a new house?

Not bad, but it does need attention. Give it 2–3 weeks to acclimate to the new environment, then schedule a tuning. Moving across town or across the country both count.

Can I tune my own piano?

We don't recommend it. Tuning requires specialized tools, trained hearing, and an understanding of string tension that takes years to develop. DIY tuning attempts are a common cause of broken strings and damaged tuning pins.

How long does a piano actually last?

A well-maintained piano can last 50–100 years or more. The biggest factors are humidity control, consistent tuning, and avoiding extreme temperature swings — all things you now know how to manage.

My piano is old / inherited — is it worth keeping?

Often, yes. Many older pianos are well-built instruments worth restoring. We offer free evaluations to assess condition and give you an honest recommendation — repair, restore, or consider our Retired Piano Program.

Do digital pianos need any of this?

No — digital pianos don't need tuning or humidity control. This guide applies to acoustic pianos only.

◆ READY TO SCHEDULE? ◆

We're here whenever your piano needs us.

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