

Wrist Technique for Piano Made Simple

Think of a conductor in front of a choir, band, or orchestra. **Why doesn't the ensemble just listen to a metronome?** Well, the conductor is not just marking time like a metronome: they are showing the ensemble beat hierarchy.

What does beat hierarchy mean?

There are different levels of more important or less important beats in a meter. The most important beat is the strongest.






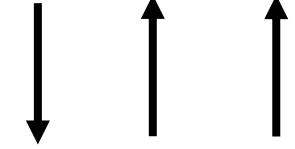

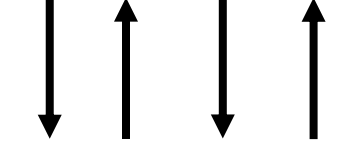
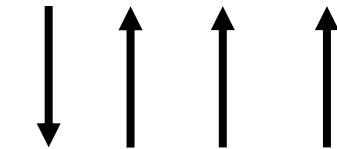
Even when there are no extra markings like accents or articulations, there are built in **strong and weak beats** for each meter.

Pianists are their own conductors. We have to somehow communicate to ourselves, our fingers, and our listeners what the meter is by showing strong and weak beats.

We do this with the WRIST. A pianist's wrists are always loose and moving slightly up or down. The wrist moves down on the strong beats and up on the weak beats.

Now, let's review some information about rhythm and time signatures.

- A **bar-line** is a vertical line that divides music into bars or measures.
- *The first beat after each bar-line is **always** the **downbeat** or strong beat.*
- The **top number** in a time signature tells you how many beats in a measure.
- The **bottom number** tells you what type of note gets the beat.

Meter	Wrist Motion
<p>2/4 </p> <p>Strong weak</p>	<p></p> <p>Down Up</p>
<p>3/4 </p> <p>Strong weak weak</p>	<p></p> <p>Down Up Up</p>
<p>4/4 </p> <p>Strong weak medium strong weak</p>	<p></p> <p>Down Up Down Up</p> <p>OR</p> <p></p> <p>Down Up Up Up</p>

Scales & Technique:

- Scales are a perfect tool for learning wrist motion. You can play a scale in any meter- the feeling of the scale changes with your wrist motion!
- Play a C Major Scale in the following **meters**:

1/**4**

2/**4**

3/**4**

4/**4**