

Group VII – Handy Harry Can Now Walk All Over the Place – Scale Prep.

Lesson VII-1 – Cross-Legged Walking – Passing Your Thumb Under

Part A

- Place your thumb on the note B, and raise your 2nd fingertip up high like that alligator's upper jaw, then curve it down into the note C# so you stand up extremely well on those two notes.
- Your thumb continues to stand on B, your 2nd flies up in the air again and descends, wafts down this time onto A#. Stand well on *these* two notes (A# and B).
- Using your thumb as a springboard, raise your 2nd high up to the sky, keeping its tip a little curved down, and alternate between C# and A#.

Part B

- Place your thumb on the note B, and raise your 2nd fingertip up high like that alligator's upper jaw, then curve it down into the note C# so you stand up extremely well on those two notes.
- Then let your thumb leave its key allowing your 3rd finger to stand on D#.
- Let your 2nd finger leave C# allowing you to tuck your thumb in under your 3rd finger, getting ready to play the note E. But don't play that note yet, just get your thumb as far under your 3rd finger as possible. You should really feel the thumb muscles, especially around its metacarpal bone, working very hard to push your thumb *further* under your hand – they really exert themselves and make a clear effort. In this sense this lesson is really not just 'sensory education' but physical exercise as well.
- Holding your thumb in its almost-cramped position under your 3rd finger, move your arm forward and up, or backward and down, to make your thumb get further away or closer to its note E without actually moving your thumb independently at all. Your thumb remains 'inert' while your arm moves it around. As if it were a broken arm in a sling or something. You can even move your arm back and down so far that your thumb touches the surface of the key.
- Now make your arm go even further back and down, still not moving your thumb independently but using your whole arm to move it into its key and actually play the note E. Your 3rd finger's arch must be very strong when you do this. It has to be a very powerful lever that your arm uses to move your clamped-but-passive thumb.
- When your thumb has been firmly rooted in its key, finally let go of D# with your 3rd finger, and play F# with your 2nd finger. Begin the same process again and continue on up the scale.

Part C

- Start your scale off the same way, but when you get to D# and are ready to play E, this time

don't move your arm at all. Tuck your thumb under your hand so it is above its key, and then keeping your 3rd finger arch really stable drop your thumb into its key without lowering your arm at all. Don't let go of D# but repeat this thumb-dropping motion many times. This is *reverse opposition*, where the thumb does the opposite of its natural grasping motion.

Part D

- Start your scale off the same way: when you get to D# and are ready to play E, again don't move your arm at all and do tuck your thumb under your hand in preparation for this next truly bizarre movement:
- Keeping your 3rd finger arch really stable, pull your thumb back towards your face. Your thumb metacarpal rises straight up and becomes more horizontal, while your thumbnail which was pointed towards you twists so it points more away from you. Then return your thumb to its tucked-under position. It's a kind of screwdriver motion. Unscrew and screw your thumb by lifting it and tucking it many times.
- When you are really used to this movement, screw your thumb a little further down so it actually plays the note E.
- Continue on up your scale, and each time you get to a thumb note, use this bizarre movement to play it.

Part E

- Repeat Parts A, B, C and D descending.

Lesson VII-2 – Handy Harry Gets Ready to Run

- Play C-D-E extremely quickly with your right hand 1-2-3. Was it even? Did all three notes sound the same loudness? First try this by jumping off the last note and flicking your arm up into the air (an excellent variation on this is the same using a B major scale instead of C major).
- The same notes, the same fingering, the same super-fast speed, but hold all the notes down – overhold them. This helps you to perceive more clearly any hidden unevenness. It also helps you to *feel* where exactly the “fall-down” is in your hand (the underlying cause of the unevenness).
- The same as step 1 but with the notes F-G-A-B, fingered 1-2-3-4.
- The same as step 2 but with the notes F-G-A-B, fingered 1-2-3-4.
- Using the hopping-launching-flipping up technique, play C-D-E, wait, take a breath, F-G-A-B, wait take a breath, C-D-E the next octave up the keyboard, wait, take a breath, F-G-A-B the next octave up the keyboard, wait take a breath, etc.
- Only when you can do this last step with real élan, real aplomb and a sense of vital confidence, try playing two of these groups more quickly – not entirely together yet, but with the breath between the two groups reduced to a minimum.
- Finally eliminate the breath altogether, play the two of them at one go – Handy Harry is really running!