

Avoid: Stay away from repertoire that is simply too forbidding or taxing.

Diversify: Look for repertoire that suits your needs, satisfies your interests and builds skills.

Invest: in a reduced-size keyboard.

Stretch: Develop flexibility through carefully designed warm-up exercises.

Develop: Physical strength, directed energy, technical skills

Release: Stay loose—release tension frequently.

Imagine: Imagine the sound and shape you want; imagine a large hand, not a small one.

Create: Modify the raw materials to create a soundscape that is satisfying without stress

I. Keep hand small

Return hand position to neutral rather than remaining extended.

Where passages use both white and black keys, stay close to black

Design fingerings that keep the hand compact, take advantage of strong fingers, and avoid awkward stretches.

Move longer over shorter fingers within a compact hand.

Instead of reaching, align the arm to favor the finger playing the melodic notes.

Allow hand to close up behind individual notes in broken chord figurations.

Don't be afraid to use thumb on black keys, or instead of inner fingers.

Slide from a black key to a neighboring white key.

Refinger arpeggios, breaking them into smaller units and adding extra shifts.

Use positional fingerings to achieve maximum speed or power.

Use finger substitution to maintain legato, especially in slower tempos.

Cluster several fingers together to play high-intensity single notes—e.g. structural bass notes

II. Reduce/Share the Load

Roll chords or break chords into smaller groups of notes.

Voice chords so that inner, “filler” notes are played with less energy.

Redistribute notes between the hands to eliminate uncomfortable stretches or leaps.

Prioritize outer voice structure and inner-register countermelodies; omit unessential (e.g. doubled) notes.

III. Economy of motion

Release notes quickly and connect with the pedal or move through distances with the forearm, upper arm and/or torso.

Replace awkward stretches with quick, lateral shifts.

Stay close to the keys: reduce the vertical amplitude of the strokes.

Use arm and/or finger impulses beginning at or very close to the key surface.

Use 1-5 repeatedly for octaves, 1-4 occasionally if comfortable.

IV. Rotation

Use the forearm to rotate between notes that are close to or far from one another

Organize forearm rotations into a larger arc-shape or down/up motions of the arm

For speed, contour and power, actively rotate in one direction only.

V. Gestural Shaping and Other Elements of Keyboard Choreography

Use larger levers for impulse and projection, smaller levers for detail.

Integrate successive notes, double notes or chords into larger gestures or impulses of the arm

Incorporate a mixture of light rebounding hand strokes into larger arc-shaped arm gestures.

Use arcs or ovals to enhance skeletal alignment or to span long distances, and fan-shaped motions of the forearm for rapid, frequent changes of direction.

VI. Musical Strategies

Subdivide long series of notes into more manageable groups.

Use the damper pedal to connect notes or to build volume

Use arm and/or wrist impulses on selected beats to help create accent structure.

Add hand staccato, forearm staccato or arm impulses to achieve power.

Direct energy through the bones of the hand.

Start under tempo and gradually accelerate.

Build volume from the bass.

Build crescendos in incremental stages.

Use subtle tempo adjustments or rhythmic compression of notes to gain time for shifts or leaps

Use or create rests to provide opportunities to shift position.

VII. Psychological Dimension

Know yourself.

Remain calm.

Be aware of your actions, how you are feeling and how you are sounding.

You can do it! Aim for a musically satisfying performance with a minimum of effort.