

SINGING EXERCISES

LEGATO, DÉTACHÉ, STACCATO, TENUTO, ACCENT

<i>Simple version:</i>	
Sing the first note without articulation, and articulate the second note.	
Similar motion	
Ascending	Descending
c - d	c - b
c - e	c - a
c - f	c - g
c - f#	c - f#
c - g	c - f
c - a	c - e
c - b	c - d
c - c	c - c

Contrary motion	
Ascending	Descending
c - d - c - e	c - b - c - a
c - f - c - f#	c - g - c - f#
c - g - c - a	c - f - c - e
c - b - c - c	c - d - c - c

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Final version:

Sing internally the first, 'ghost note' without articulation, and articulate the second and third notes.

When transferring arm weight, begin internally singing the 'ghost note' on "&" as you lean slightly backward.

Similar motion

Ascending	Descending
a - c - d	e - c - b
a - c - e	e - c - a
a - c - f	e - c - g
a - c - f#	e - c - f#
a - c - g	e - c - f
a - c - a	e - c - e
a - c - b	e - c - d
a - c - c	e - c - c

Contrary motion

Ascending	Descending
d - c - d - c - e	b - c - b - c - a
e - c - f - c - f#	a - c - g - c - f#
f# - c - g - c - a	f# - c - f - c - e
a - c - b - c - c	e - c - d - c - c

TWO - NOTE SLUR

Sing the 'ghost note' on upbeat, second note on downbeat, and the last note on upbeat again.

Similar motion	
Ascending	Descending
a - c - d	e - c - b
a - c - e	e - c - a
a - c - f	e - c - g
a - c - f#	e - c - f#
a - c - g	e - c - f
a - c - a	e - c - e
a - c - b	e - c - d
a - c - c	e - c - c

Contrary motion	
Ascending	Descending
d - c - d	b - c - b
e - c - e	a - c - a
f - c - f	g - c - g
f# - c - f#	f# - c - f#
g - c - g	f - c - f
a - c - a	e - c - e
b - c - b	d - c - d
c - c - c	c - c - c

PLAYING EXERCISES

Five Key Principles for Playing Articulations Without Excessive Tension

1. Begin in a Slow Tempo

Terms such as staccato, tenuto, and accent can still trigger unconscious physical tension. Starting slowly, two seconds a note, allows the mind and body to approach each articulation calmly and with clarity.

2. Use a Double Roll & Double Swing

When practicing tenuto and accent, work with a double swing motion. This helps release unnecessary tension.

3. Be Clear About When to Release the Key

Precise timing of the release is essential:

- Staccato: release the key just after touching the key.
 - Tenuto & Accent: release the key just before the wrist reaches 12 o'clock.
- The exact moment again depends on the direction of the roll and double swing.

4. Maintain a Steady Count in Tenuto and Accent

Count "1 & 2 &" with an even pulse.

A steady, even pulse brings the momentum and gives your hand space to breathe.

- On "1" and "2": play the notes.
- On "&": bring the wrist to 12 o'clock while keeping the fingertips in contact with the keys.

5. Coordination Between Count and Energy Release

When playing staccato, tenuto, or accents:

During the end of the count "oneee...", you gradually exhale, and release tension.

After the "&" is the moment you begin to regain your energy, preparing with healthy tension for the next note.

Key principles to avoid excessive tension in playing accents

When playing accents, you may have a tendency to continue pushing through the key after striking the note—this is an old habit to be mindful of.

Pay extra attention to keeping your hand light, empty and relaxed, not just before the accent but also during its execution. The hand should remain weightless at every stage. The sharp, fast effect of an accent comes solely from the extreme acceleration of your intonation—not from physical tension.

If your hand becomes tense or anxious, the acceleration won't flow freely into your playing, and the accent will feel sluggish and weak, lacking the desired sharpness and impact. Focus on maintaining an empty, relaxed hand and achieving the accent purely through the energy of intonation—through the vocal cords of your inner singing—with acceleration and weight.

When done correctly, your hand will naturally make a slight upward bounce after playing the last note of an interval, creating a subtle 'roll'. To feel that natural, effortless bounce when playing accents, you can follow this simple guide at first:

- Take a slow tempo and count steadily: "1 & 2 &" while playing an interval with a 'double roll'.
- On 1, play the first note at the 6 o'clock and make your first 'roll'.
- On &, release the first note and bring your wrist to 12 o'clock in your second 'roll'.
- On 2, play your second note with an accent, again at the 6 o'clock of that second 'roll'. If you play this second note with a fully relaxed, empty hand, you'll notice that your wrist naturally bounces back and might even create a light 'roll' on its own. Let this bounce happen freely, it's a good sign!
- On &, release that second note naturally after that subtle bounce, at about 12 o'clock in your second 'roll'.

General Guidelines

Practice legato, two-note slur, staccato, détaché, tenuto, and accent, hands separately and hands together, in:

- pianissimo: slow, faster, fast
- fortissimo: slow, faster, fast

1. Introduce a Ghost Note

To play both notes with clear articulation, begin by intonating an additional ghost note—singing three notes while playing only two. With time, you will naturally feel how to intonate and articulate the two notes without the extra sung note.

When transferring arm weight to the keyboard, begin internally singing the ghost note on “&” as you lean slightly backward.

2. Follow the Sequence Below Precisely

1. **Sing the interval internally**, including the ghost note.
2. **Imagine all notes** in sound texture and dynamics, with sound movement and glissando.
3. **Count “1 & 2”** to maintain healthy breathing tension and prevent stiffness in the hand.
4. **Transfer arm weight** to the instrument.
 - As you lean backward and prepare the motion, begin internally singing the ghost note on “&”.
5. **Play with 3D wrist motion** (and 2D motion for faster tempos), imagining each sound and internally singing each articulation.
6. Ensure that the amplitude of the **3D motion is sufficient** when playing slowly.
7. **Play the last note with a simple 2D wrist motion**—without rolls or swings.

This final motion should simply mirror the path of the imagined sound movement.

Comparison Between Tenuto and Accent

Tenuto

- Keep the throat relaxed.
- Transfer arm weight deeply enough to sustain the tone.
- Use only a small amount of acceleration.
- As you touch the final key, allow the wrist to move sideways.
- In singing, let the hand and arm weight travel straight downward, reflecting a natural, supported descent.

Accent

- Keep the throat relaxed.
- Transfer arm weight less deeply than in tenuto.
- Use extreme acceleration to create the articulation.
- As you touch the final key, allow the wrist to move sideways.
- When playing, avoid dropping the wrist below the key bed.

Practice these exercises until the movements feel natural and effortless.

This ease arises when new muscle memory begins to guide your inner sensations.

LEGATO, DÉTACHÉ, STACCATO, TENUTO, ACCENT

Similar motion	
Ascending	Descending
a - c - d	e - c - b
a - c - e	e - c - a
a - c - f	e - c - g
a - c - f#	e - c - f#
a - c - g	e - c - f

Contrary motion	
Ascending	Descending
d - c - d - c - e	b - c - b - c - a
e - c - f - c - f#	a - c - g - c - f#

TWO-NOTE SLUR

Similar motion	
Ascending	Descending
a - c - d	e - c - b
a - c - e	e - c - a
a - c - f	e - c - g
a - c - f#	e - c - f#
a - c - g	e - c - f

Contrary motion	
Ascending	Descending
d - c - d	b - c - b
e - c - e	a - c - a
f - c - f	g - c - g
f# - c - f#	f# - c - f#
g - c - g	f - c - f

OPEN LESSONS

