

Keyboard Options

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Beginner keyboard: Must have full-size keys

The more expensive portable keyboards have features that a beginner does not need (such as bells & whistles for novice players or advanced features for professionals). Acceptable basic instruments start at about \$120, like these:

- Casio CT-S200 - <https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/CTS200BK--casio-casiotone-ct-s200-black>
- Yamaha YPT260 - <https://www.amazon.com/Yamaha-Portable-Keyboard-Adapter-Amazon-Exclusive/dp/B077C4WXB8>

At KMAC, we use Yamaha PSR-E263 keyboards for the Beginner Piano Class. The new version (E273) is currently \$130 at Guitar Center and Sweetwater:

- <https://www.guitarcenter.com/Yamaha/PSR-E273-61-Key-Portable-Keyboard-1500000318637.gc>
- <https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/PSRE273--yamaha-psr-e273-61-key-portable-arranger>

You can use batteries (six AA) or buy an adapter for \$15 (scroll down the web page for options).

You can also search Amazon, Walmart, Target and other places for special deals, especially around the holidays. The club stores (Sam's, BJ's, Costco) sometimes have a similar option available. I went to Sweetwater and Guitar Center for pricing because they have good reputations. Guitar Center's advantage is that they have a store in Harrisburg - <https://stores.guitarcenter.com/harrisburg> - so you can look at the different options and take a keyboard home the same day. And if the price on their website is lower than what you see in store, they will match the online price.

Available accessories: Keyboard stand (we have our keyboards on tables), sustain pedal (not really necessary until more advanced, which may be when you want to upgrade your keyboard anyway), headphones, bench, and a case or cover.

Acoustic Piano: New, used, upright, grand...so many options

First, do not get a spinet (small upright, no taller than 40") due to issues with the action, tuning and overall quality. Google it for a more detailed explanation. Now that we got that out of the way...

If you are looking for a top-quality instrument or a piano that will be a focal point or piece of fine furniture for your home, you can always buy a new piano. A reputable dealer will also have used pianos for sale that will cost more than what you'll find on Facebook Marketplace, but it can be worth it if there's a warranty - kinda like buying a certified used car from a new car dealer. You can find top-quality pianos available from individuals, schools and other businesses, but you should get a professional evaluation before dropping big bucks on a purchase like this.

There are plenty of console (41"-44" tall), studio (45" and taller) and baby grand pianos available for moderate or low cost, plus many that are free. Important factors to consider: Is the soundboard cracked? Will it hold a tuning? Do all the keys work properly? Is it cosmetically OK for you? How difficult will it be to move (or, since you should not try to do it yourself, how much will it cost to move)? Again, it should be looked at by someone who knows pianos - piano teacher, piano tuner, etc.

Keep in mind that acoustic pianos require tuning (once or twice a year) and occasional maintenance. They are also heavy and bulky. The cost to move a piano locally is approximately \$300 - \$500.

Conclusion: An acoustic piano is the way to go if you are ready and willing to make the commitment.

KMAC uses studio uprights in our piano lesson rooms and we have two baby grands in the big room.

Digital Piano: Must have weighted keys

While a decent, well-maintained acoustic piano offers the best sound quality and opportunity for expression, a digital piano has many advantages, such as: doesn't need tuning, rarely if ever needs maintenance, easier to move, takes up less space, has additional sounds, includes output connections for headphones and computer recording.

There are a lot of options and what you choose depends on your intended uses. Just make sure that it has weighted keys so that it feels similar to playing an acoustic piano.

KMAC has a Yamaha CLP Clavinova in Room 5.