

All Things Pedal - Part I...of Many

Food for Thought: Learning to play the *piano* is easy in the beginning and difficult in the end. Learning to play the *organ* is difficult in the beginning and easy in the end.

Why Use the Pedals?

1. **Efficiency:** The goal of beautiful organ playing is to develop a legato touch. The feet, when used correctly, add a “third hand.” In hymn playing, the right hand can play the soprano and alto parts (Demo: #31 O God, Our Help in Ages Past) and the left hand can play the tenor part. The feet play the bass part. This makes it easier to play all parts legato. (Difficult in the beginning, but easy in the end!)
2. **Voicing:** The pedals can add a pitch an octave lower. The organ is like an orchestra; it is capable of playing very high or very low pitches. Without the pedal it would be like listening to an orchestra without the string basses or tuba. The lower pitches add depth and balance to the higher pitches on the organ (Demo: #31 O God, Our Help in Ages Past).

Why play the pedals with both feet rather than just the left foot?

1. Using both feet makes it possible to play each bass note in the written register—better voice leading (Demo with left foot only #81, Press Forward, Saints).
2. Using both feet makes it possible to play legato (Demo with both feet #81, Press Forward, Saints).

Why do we need special shoes for pedal playing?

1. Organ shoes, with their wide, one-inch heels; narrow, thin soles; and soft, flexible uppers, make it possible to play more accurately and comfortably.

Pedal Registration

1. **For preludes** use a soft 8’ stop or an 8’ with a soft 16’ stop. Or, with the soft 16’ stop, couple the softer manual to the pedal. This is like the cellos in an orchestra playing at the singing pitch and the string basses playing an octave lower—it sounds good (Demo from Manookin preludes, vol. 4, page 15, Teach Me to Walk in the Light). Using the 16’ alone creates too wide of a gap between the bass and the trebles—poor orchestration (Demo soft 16’ with and without the soft 8’ stop). Playing with the left foot only on lower pitches may create even wider gaps. In this case try the 8’ alone or coupled with the softer manual.
2. **For hymn singing** use the 16’ Principal with the Gt. to Pedal coupler (Demonstrate with hymn #219, Because I Have Been Given Much, using 16’ Principal with and without the Gt. to Pedal).

Tying Bass Notes in Hymn Singing

1. Avoid tying the bass part across bar lines (Demo: #3, Now Let Us Rejoice).
2. Try tying bass with repeated dotted rhythms (Demo: #250, We Are All Enlisted).
3. Tie choppy rhythms in the bass line (Demo: #241, Count Your Many Blessings).
4. Tie from strong to weak beats, not from weak to strong (Demo: #3, Now Let Us Rejoice).

Pedal Orientation

Organ Shoes

see <www.organ.byu.edu/ORSHOE.html>

Upper
(snug fit, flexible)

Heel
(wide, about 1 inch high)

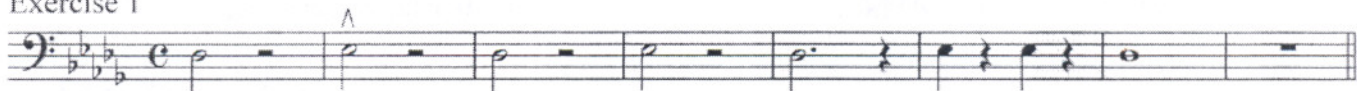
Sole
(thin, slide easily, not wider than shoe)

Arch
(no bridge between heel and sole)



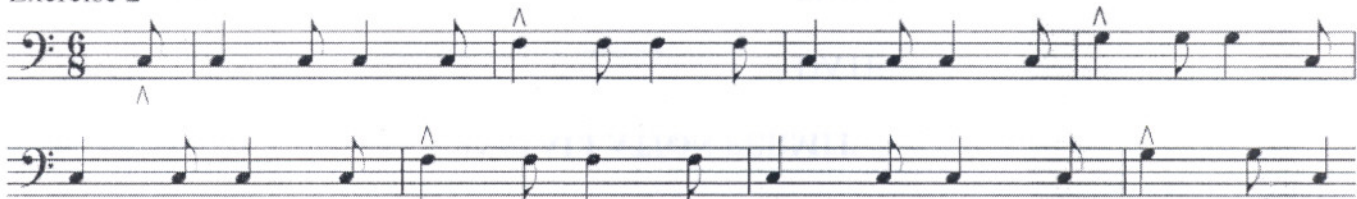
Pedal Exercises for Lesson 2

Exercise 1



^--a carat placed below the staff indicates left toe;
above the staff indicates right toe

Exercise 2



Exercise 3



o--a circle or U-shaped symbol indicates the heel

Continue by learning the pedal line of Hymn 142, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (simplified for organ in three parts) as described near the end of Lesson 2.