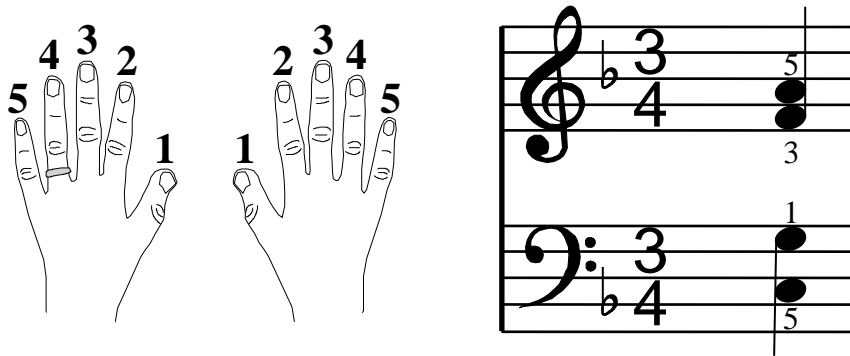


Fingering

In this lesson, you'll add fingering to the Happy Birthday song that you picked out in the *Playing By Ear* lesson. Designated fingering allows you to reliably move from one group of keys to another without breaking the rhythm of the song. Since hands differ, there is no one absolutely correct way to finger a song. But it's important to use the *same* fingering each time in order to develop the "muscle memory" needed to play a song accurately.

Standard Finger Notation

Standard notation uses the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for fingers as shown below. Since numbers are also used for timing (3/4, 1+2+3+...), this can cause some confusion. Most sheet music omits fingering altogether or includes it only for tricky passages, leaving it up to you to decide which fingers to use.

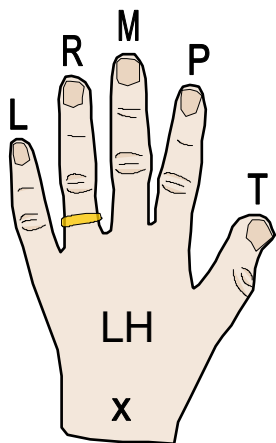


The small numbers near the notes indicate which fingers to use

Allcanplay Finger Notation

Allcanplay uses the letters TPMRL and *tpmrl* for fingers as shown below. None of the letters are key names (CDEFGAB), so there is no possibility of confusion. Each key in a song is marked to ensure that the same fingers are used each time. While the recommended fingering will work for most players, you are free to change the marked letters to what works best for you.

LLEFT HAND LARGE BLACK LETTERS



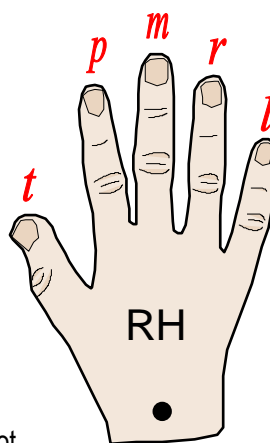
Left rhymes with X

Thumb
Pointer
Middle
Ring
Little

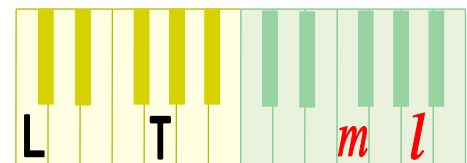
thumb
pointer
middle
ring
little

If fingering is not yet known, use tiny x's and dots as placeholders

RRight Hand *w*Ritten *R*ed letters



Right ●n!



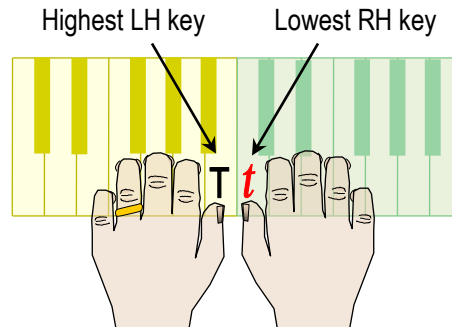
This is Allcanplay for the same notes and fingering shown in the standard music example above

Find Hi/Lo Boundaries

The first step to adding fingering to a song is to find and mark the highest and lowest keys played by either hand, which will make it easier to find and add fingering in between.

Hi/Lo Thumbs

One goal of fingering is to move your hands as little as possible. Given the opposite anatomy of each hand, you'll always play the *highest* LH key with **T** and the *lowest* RH key with **t**. It would be inefficient to use any other fingers, as it would involve moving your hands farther than necessary.

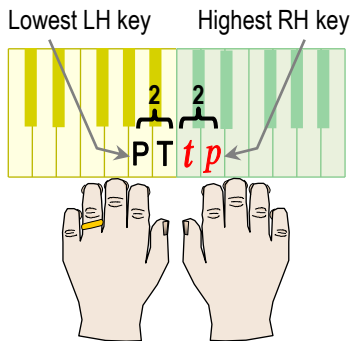


Depending on the song, Hi/Lo Thumbs can fall on *any* keys. This diagram depicts one possibility.

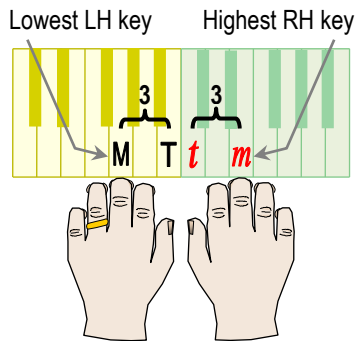
Hi/Lo Fingers

The finger you use for the non-thumb boundary key depends on the Hi/Lo Span, which is the number of white keys from the lowest to the highest key in each hand.

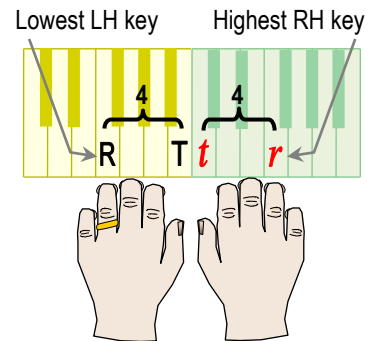
If Hi/Lo Span = 2
use thumb-pointer



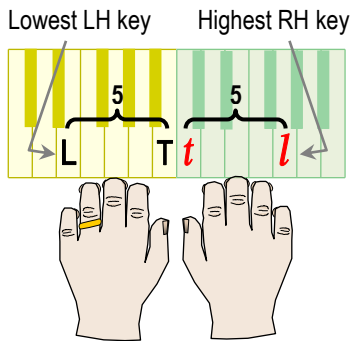
If Hi/Lo Span = 3
use thumb-middle



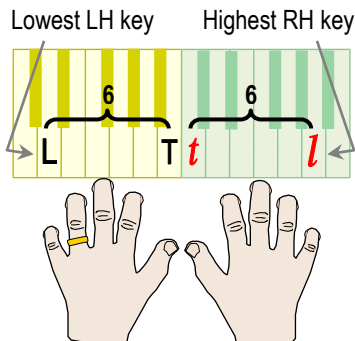
If Hi/Lo Span = 4
use thumb-ring



If Hi/Lo Span = 5
use thumb-little



If Hi/Lo Span = 6
use thumb-little



General Rule
For spans of 5 or more, use your thumb and little finger.

Happy Birthday Fingering

Mark Right Hand Fingering

Continuing with the keys you marked with dots and x's in the *Playing By Ear* lesson (duplicated below), use the following guidelines to find & mark the RH fingering.

1. Scan each column of keyboards to find the *lowest* RH key. It turns out be the very first key: C⁴

As this is the lowest your RH has to reach, mark it with a *t* for thumb. Use pencil for now.

Similarly, mark each C⁴ key in the melody with a *t*. There should be 8 in all.

		C ³	C ⁴	C ⁵	Lyric	Section
		CHORD				
1	HAP-	x	x	x	o	
	-PY				o	
	BIRTH-				o	
	-DAY				o	
	TO				o	
	YOU.	x	x	x	o	C ⁷
2	HAP-				o	
	-PY				o	
	BIRTH-				o	
	-DAY				o	
	TO				o	
	YOU.	x	x	x	o	F

3	HAP-				o	
	-PY				o	
	BIRTH-				o	
	-DAY				o	
	DEAR				o	
	NA-	x	x	x	o	Bb
4	-ME.				o	
	HAP-				o	
	-PY				o	
	BIRTH-				o	
	-DAY	x	x	x	o	F
	TO	x	x	x	o	C ⁷
5	YOU.	x	x	x	o	F

2. Now scan each column to find the *highest* RH key. It turns out to be C⁵ in the second column, and it occurs only once.

Observe that Hi/Lo span is 8, which is an octave.



Mark C⁵ with an *l* for little finger (in pencil) as this is the highest your RH has to reach.

3. Experiment on your piano to find and pencil in the RH fingering that works for you in between the Hi/Lo keys.

Maintain 5-finger position when possible, as it makes mistakes less likely.

Try to avoid awkward positions and movements.

4. Add symbols like anchors, spans, ghosts, pivots, and tips as needed or desired. (See *Symbols* lesson)

Compare your results to those on the following page.

Sample Right Hand Fingering

Compare the following fingering, symbols, and tips to the ones you created on your Happy Birthday songsheet. Make changes to your version as desired.

When you're satisfied, trace over finger letters with **red** ink.

C ³	C ⁴	C ⁵	Lyric CHORD	Section
				1
x	x	x	HAP-	
	5		F	
	t		-PY	
	t		BIRTH-	
	p		-DAY	
	t		TO	
	r		YOU.	
x	x	x	C7	
	m		HAP-	2
	t		-PY	
	t		BIRTH-	
	p		-DAY	
	t		TO	
	i		YOU.	
x	x	x	F	
	r			
				3
	t		HAP-	
	8		-PY	
	t		BIRTH-	
	5		-DAY	
	t		DEAR	
	p		NA-	
x	x	x	Bb	
	p		-ME.	
	t			
				4
	t		HAP-	
	t		-PY	
	p		BIRTH-	
	t		-DAY	
x	x	x	BIRTH-	
	r		F	
	p		-DAY	
x	x	x	TO	
	m		C7	
x	x	x	YOU.	
	p		F	

Stretch *l* to octave interval without looking & move *t* up to 5-finger position

Pivot on *t* & cross over with *p* then pivot on *p* and cross under with *t*

Feel for the top triplet with *l* without looking

Create Left Hand Chord Arrangement

On your songsheet, pencil in any left-hand chord arrangement that pleases you, then compare it to the one on the following page.

You'll want to choose how often to play or hold (tie) each chord, and whether to play chords blocked, broken, or arpeggiated. (See *Chords* lesson)

There are dozens of possible arrangements, but no right or wrong one. It's a matter of personal preference.

Sample Left Hand Chord Arrangement

For simplicity, especially if you plan to sing along as you play, the following arrangement keeps the left hand in 5-finger position (until the last chord) by omitting selected chord keys.

Happy Birthday

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> C³ C⁴ C⁵ </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> M T r </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Lyric Section </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> CHORD 1 </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> 3 </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> HAP- F HAP- F </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> HAP- F </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> -PY -PY </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> -PY </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> BIRTH- -DAY BIRTH- -DAY </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> BIRTH- -DAY </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> TO TO </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> DEAR </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> YOU. C7 YOU. C7 </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> NA- Bb </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> HAP- -PY HAP- -PY </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> -ME. </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> BIRTH- -DAY BIRTH- -DAY </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> HAP- -PY </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> TO TO </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> BIRTH- F </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> YOU. F YOU. F </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> -DAY </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> YOU. F YOU. F </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> TO C7 </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> YOU. F YOU. F </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> YOU. F </div>

Stretch *l* to octave interval without looking & move *t* up to 5-finger position

Pivot on *t* & cross over with *p* then pivot on *p* and cross under with *t*

Feel for the top triplet with *l* without looking

You may prefer to play full chords, especially keeping the B^b key in the C7 chord which gives it that distinctive 7th chord sound. When you're satisfied with your chording, trace over your LH fingering with **black** ink and erase any remaining pencil marks.

If this arrangement is too high or too low for your or your audience's voice range, you can learn to easily transpose it to a different key in the *Practical Music Theory* lesson.

For a variety of alternate chord patterns and melody enhancements,
see the *Improvisation Techniques* lesson.