

1 to 5 Piano: Musical Medicine

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Abstract

One to Five Piano Institute was established in November 2007 as a non-profit organization. This article is a description of the one to five piano methodologies. This includes the research in the use of music in a therapeutic manner with two example case studies detailed in this article. The history of the 1 to 5 Piano spans across both Thailand and China. It is an example of an outstanding innovative music therapy project created by Thai pianist Trirat Uptampohtiwat, the director of the One to Five Institution.

Trirat Uptampohtiwat has been teaching piano using his unique technique known as 1 to 5 Piano for 35 years to a diverse range of people. It includes the elderly, blind, deaf, exceptional children, and patients undergoing psychiatric rehabilitation as well as the general public. In addition, he serves as a music therapy advisor to Thailand's Department of Mental Health and the Ministry of Public Health.

Keywords: *Music Therapy, Thailand, 1-5 Piano*

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Introduction – What is 1 to 5 Piano?

The 1 to 5 Piano method may initially appear to be just a simple technique for learning to play the piano, but it actually offers more. It is a new and extremely effective music therapy and brain training process that has far-reaching therapeutic benefits. It is *music for medicine* and has been proven as a tool for improving the quality of life for people of all ages suffering from the challenges associated with:

- **Children & Youths:** Autism, Learning Disabilities, ADD, ADHD, electronic game addiction etc.
- **The Elderly:** Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Dementia
- **Others:** Stress, pre- and post-maternal mental health issues, memory loss, insomnia, psychiatric issues (in the rehabilitation stage), drug addiction, stroke patients, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, Schizophrenia etc.

How does 1 to 5 Piano Work Therapeutically?

The 1 to 5 method of musical therapy is classified by psychologists and psychiatrists as a form of visual motor auditory (VMA) mapping training. The theory is that it will likely engage and possibly strengthen a multi-sensory frontoparietal network of regions and pathways in the brain that respond to visual, auditory and motor representations of the same action, and sensory motor feedback.

In simpler terms, 1 to 5 Piano Therapy is a brain training exercise and an active meditation (or dynamic meditation) process that can be used for improving mental and physical health, through regular practice. Medical studies have linked various disorders with over activity or faulty neurological wiring in the default mode network of the brain. It has been proven that this brain region is less active in experienced meditators, and that regular meditation and the use of meditative techniques actually rewire the brain. Increasingly, studies suggest that the brains of experienced meditators actually work differently than the brains of those who don't meditate. There is strong evidence that meditative practice appears to change the way the brain works, and provides benefits in dealing with mental disorders.

When one plays using the 1 to 5 Piano technique, both hands are used. This has the effect of balancing the left and right brains, thus enabling the brain to continually change and effectively rewire itself. During this active meditation process, when the fingers are moved on the piano keyboard, together with using concentration, feeling, and instinct to move the fingers decisively to the required notes, this invokes the visual motor and auditory mapping process.

Research Results:

Joint research with the Faculty of Physical Therapy at Mahidol University, Salaya, Nakorn Pathom was conducted on the "Effect of Musical Training on Reaction Time" with a randomized control trial in elderly Thai individuals that resulted in statistically significant improvements in visual and auditory reaction times over the control group in a seven week program.

In addition to these benefits and in dealing with mental disorders, there are also the additional benefits of the pleasure of creating music for oneself, the self-satisfaction of quickly and easily being able to play the piano, plus the soothing nature of music itself which evokes an overall sense of well-being in the individual. This helps to make 1 to 5 Piano a very compelling and engaging form of therapy.

What is the 1 to 5 Piano Technique?

The 1 to 5 Piano technique uses easy to follow numerical musical notation (rather than complex, hard to learn traditional notation). Effectively, each musical note is translated into a number from one to five, for either the right hand or left hand. It is so simple that any person who has the ability to count from one to five can learn the technique in a very short period of time.

The numerical music notes represent the five fingers of each hand [1 - for thumb, 2 - for index finger, 3 - for middle finger, 4 for ring finger, and 5 for little finger]. This simple, but extremely powerful technique of using only the numbers from one to five, replaces complex traditional musical notes. This makes it easy to follow, and enables everyone (even those with learning disabilities and psychological impairments) to learn to play piano - quickly, effectively, and enjoyably.

Advantages of the 1 to 5 Piano Technique

- No musical knowledge is required to begin, because it is easy, rapid, effective, and gives instant results with no stress and no tension
- Knowing only the numbers 1-2-3-4-5 and the letters A-B-C-D-E-F-G is sufficient
- Easy to follow as no decoding required
- Easily understood by everybody (young children, the elderly, and those with mental disorders)
- Cost-effective because 1 to 5 Piano can be played on inexpensive keyboards
- Same benefits as meditation by using visual motor auditory mapping training with the systematic concentration of playing the piano with both hands
- 1 to 5 Piano is a *musical medicine* unlike other music therapies in general because it is a form of proactive treatment with the patients taking action themselves
- It can also reduce medication requirements, and their associated side effects
- Increased feelings of happiness, mental wellbeing, self-esteem, & inner peace

The benefits of the 1 to 5 Piano method as a therapy, source of pleasure and relaxation, is enhanced by the fact that music is considered to be a universal language. It reaches even the illiterate, and the uneducated, and the dysfunctional. It is hoped that the 1 to 5 Piano methodology will help to spread music as the universal language for humanity, and start to assist in breaking down the barriers between people, communities and nations in the future.

Background of the 1 to 5 Piano Institute

The 1 to 5 Piano Technique was developed by Trirat Uptampohtiwat of Bangkok, Thailand who has more than 35 years experience as a piano instructor. Trirat has

believed for many years that the 1 to 5 Piano technique can be used as an effective music therapy methodology, and is now pursuing his dream of improving the lives of millions of people -including the very young, the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled, and simply those who are stressed and are seeking an effective form of relaxation.

The 1 to 5 Piano Institute was established in November 2007, as a Not-for-Profit organization, with the vision to make its 1 to 5 Piano Technique widely available as an effective form of musical therapy to the people of the world after starting in Thailand. Following his initial local success, the Institute's vision is now being implemented by introducing it into selected countries such as China, Singapore and Australia to further prove its core concepts.

In order to achieve its vision, the 1 to 5 Piano Institute is now actively seeking to enter into partnering and support arrangements with the music therapy associations, medical and mental health authorities (initially in Singapore and Australia), as well as organizations specializing in providing support for people with various mental disorders. It's plans are to work with these organizations to solidify and refine the concept while gaining widespread acceptance and promotion of it before embarking on more global programs.

This innovative and unique 1 to 5 Piano technique is currently in the process of being patented globally.

Case Study A

As the 1 to 5 Piano technique as music therapy is both simple to learn and easy to teach, the Institute has been offering programs on the 1 to 5 Piano Therapy techniques to the rural communities in the Loei Province, Thailand to support sustainable community development. It began the project at "Somdet Prayuparaj Dansai Community Hospital" in 2009, at first for the mental and physical health of hospital staff. Subsequently the 1 to 5 Piano therapy is provided as a full in-hospital, outpatient, and community-based program to a broad and varied audience. 1 to 5 Piano therapy is used throughout the hospital, and daily sessions are conducted by physiotherapists with patients in many areas of the hospital, including Neonatal care, Pediatric, Orthopedics, and even as a pain killer for patients with chronic pain from undetermined causes, and for chronic illness from physical and psychological causes, as well as to support people in enhancing their overall quality of life.

In addition, the 1 to 5 Piano methodology is now a leading tool used by the psychotherapy and medical teams of Somdet Prayuparaj Dansai Hospital to assist with stress management, and to promote relaxation for over 300 students in the community's Chumchon Baan Dansai primary school. The target groups are students in economically deprived areas, and in communities lacking the full range of social services. These students come from families in which the problems include conflict, unemployment, economic hardship, substance abuse, absent parents, and other dysfunctions etc. Some of the students suffer from autism,

learning disabilities, ADD, and ADHD. In total, over 700 students have had regular exposure to 1 to 5 Piano, and have experienced positive changes in their behavior. The proven results are most satisfying for their parents, teachers and medical teams. The 1 to 5 Piano Therapy has provided more than therapeutic outcomes. It has given participants the opportunity for meaningful and satisfying activities to improve their studies, to change their behavior while offering hope for improved lives for the 700 students and their families. The results of the 1 to 5 Piano program in Loei Province are a simple, but impressive demonstration of the level of accomplishment that can be achieved.

Case Study B

“James” was a seven year old student at Chumchon Bann Dansai Primary School in 2009. He was very aggressive, and often violent with his teachers and other students.

James’ parents are separated, unemployed, involved with substance abuse (alcoholics). He was both physically and mentally abused, and even tortured by his parents, tied up with rope and chains, and kept captive in the straw hut where he lived, with insufficient food for several years. A relative of his mother who is a teacher found and adopted him. She sent James to primary school, which was where James’s violent behavior and aggressiveness were identified. He did not trust anyone, teachers and friends were seen as enemies, resulting in constant fighting with teachers and classmates. He was sent to the mental hospital, but the Medical Team from Somdet Prayuparaj Dansai’s were simply not equipped to deal with a multi-traumatized victim, and nor provide him with the level of warmth and appropriate intensive treatment he badly needed.

However, his psychotherapist began incorporating the 1 to 5 Piano therapy in the sessions with him. Within one month (after using the therapy once a week for 15-30 minutes), James became calmer and more reasonable, his aggressiveness decreased, his behavior had completely changed. He also appeared to be much happier. This music therapy has comforted him, soothed him, and calmed him down. He is achieving great satisfaction from being able to play his own music, using an inexpensive keyboard, utilizing the 1 to 5 Piano numerical music notes.

Now James is 10 years old, and has been confirmed as being a good student by both his teacher, and the medical team at Somdet Prayuparaj Dansai Hospital.

With the 1 to 5 Piano technique, children who play piano have developed musical skills which engenders self-esteem and greater self-confidence.

The philosophy that “Every Child Can” has helped 1 to 5 Piano achieve unbelievable success, even with children who previously had no hope.

Testimonials:

1 to 5 Piano Therapy for children in Dansai, Loei, Thailand

From the Dansai Crown Hospital and the ChumChon Ban Dansai School

Many things that we need can wait. But for the children they can't wait. For our children we cannot say the word "Tomorrow," because their names are "Today."

Gabriala Mystal

In Dansai District (Loei Province, Thailand), we have a big problem with many children having Learning Disability. In ChumChon Ban Dansai School, just one of 66 schools in the province, we have 61 learning disabled children (10% of the total students).

After we used 1 to 5 Piano as music therapy with the students for six months to one year, we saw an amazing improvement in these children. Nearly 65% of them have shown improvement in learning ability, social and communication skills, and emotional control. But the greatest benefit is the "HAPPINESS" that they have.

Now, in ChumChon Ban Dansai school, we have keyboards in every classroom, for all students (almost 700 students). The students and teachers can play any time they feel like it.

MUSIC is around all over the school. There is a SMILE ON EVERYONE'S FACE, and HAPPINESS is inside EVERYONE'S HEART. THIS IS THE MAGIC OF 1 to 5 PIANO.

Darin Jungpattanawadee (Pharmacist at the Dansai Crown Prince Hospital and volunteer for 1 to 5 Piano)

Location & Event History of Successful 1 To 5 Piano Programs

Relating to Learning Disability Children - 1 To 5 Piano Technique used in training is simple approachable and easy to learn especially when using in classroom, the students will get a number of benefits for example; developing their listening skills and cooperative team work, and facilitates easier planning for teachers.

Besides the 1 To 5 Piano Institute itself, there are many therapy programs using the 1 To 5 Piano technique as therapeutic tool in rural communities. It is currently, established in special education schools, mainstream schools and kindergartens where it delivers a special form of therapy to children and everyone with special needs as follows:

- Schools for the blind and deaf
- Rattanakosin School for the Learning Disabled
- The Royal Institute of Child Development in Chiang Mai.
- Autistic Association in Khon khaen
- Mental Disabled Children Association in Loei
- Srithanya Psychiatric Hospital
- Srithanya Family Link Unit
- 17 Psychiatric Hospitals under the supervision of the Thai Mental Health Department
- Bangpakok Hospital (Rajburana)

- Nakhornthon Hospital
- Somdet Chaopraya Psychiatric Institute Hospital
- Somdet Prayuparaj Dansai Hospital (Loei)
- Lamsonthi Community Hospital (Lopburi)
- Khon khan Rajanakarin Psychiatric Hospital

Workshops & Events

- Workshop in developing children's EQ/IQ to teachers and carers of community primary schools in Bangkok at The Convention Hall, Prince Palace Hotel
- Workshop for teachers at Chumchon Ban Dansai primary school, Loei
- Workshop for stress release for trauma victims at Oon Ai Rak Home, Bangkok
- Workshop for disabled children at Pakkred Home, Nonthaburi
- Workshop for HIV infected children (absent parents) at Lorenzo Home, Chon-buri
- Workshop & Seminar to members of the Healthy Living Club regarding sleep quality at Bamrungrad Hospital, Bangkok
- Workshop for stress release to homeless people at Termrak Home, Surathani
- Workshop at Sanmahapon Welfare Center for homeless, Chiang Mai
- Workshop at Rama IX Temple as a pre-meditation for meditators, Bangkok
- Workshop during Children's Day activities at Thai PBS Television, Bangkok

Presentations

- Presentation 1 To 5 Piano Therapy at The Annual Meeting of Ministry Of Public Health.
- Presentation at the ASEAN Federation for Psychiatry and Mental Health conference at Siam Paragon
- Presentation at Annual Meeting of South Asian Forum of Mental Health and Psychiatry
- Presentation at WHO Mental Wellbeing Conference in Sri Lanka
- Presentation at Lobetalarbeit E.V. Institute, Cell, Germany
- Presentation & Workshop at Dominiek Savio Institute in Belgium

Private Classes for Groups and Individuals

- Conducted 1 To 5 Piano Classes jointly with Work Point Entertainment at Chamchuree Square, Bangkok
- Conducted 1 To 5 Piano Classes for the staff of Telephone Organization Of Thailand

1 To 5 Piano in The People Republic Of China

- Opened 70 branches of 1 To 5 Piano as sister companies in six cities, Beijing, Shanghai, Guanzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Xiamen
- Opened 30 branches of the Piano Café for private lessons in Beijing, Shanghai, Guanzhou, Shenzhen, Xiamen.

Publications

- Articles focusing on the 1 To 5 Piano method and Trirat Uptamphotiwat have been published in leading newspapers such as Bangkok Post, Bangkok Biz News etc.
- Magazines such as Skulthai, Elle, The Manager, Bazaar Magazine, Mahasajan One to Five, “Mai Mi Krai Nai Loke Len Piano Mai Dai,” Sen Tang Kiatiyos etc.

Television Programs

- Big Family
- Lor Len Lok
- After news Modern Nine TV
- 108 Music
- Busaba Bann Chao
- Talok Hok Chaak
- Bang Or
- Cheevit Cheeva
- Super Health
- Mount Mun Mun
- Nueg One Deao Gun
- Buntut Khon Dee
- Cable TV Rak Look
- Princess Dairy
- Gino Health Club



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