

The Piano Owner's Heads-Up Guide to Important Piano Maintenance

Focus On: Brass Rail Repair



Information provided courtesy of:

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Upright pianos built early in the last century which have brass rails and flanges are by this time often having problems which necessitate repair. Breakage of any of the component parts of a brass rail system will result in notes being put out of commission. **The brass rail / flange system of your upright piano has reached the point where repair is necessary if the piano is to be enjoyed without the inconvenience of notes which suddenly stop working.**

In a piano action with a brass rail each hammer assembly (consisting of a hammer, hammer butt and hammer shank) pivots on a brass center pin held in place between a 'tongue' of the brass rail itself, and a small rectangular brass part called the butt plate. The repairs needed the most often are replacement of broken butt plates, and repair of broken tongues on the brass rail itself. Sometimes when a number of tongues are broken, it makes sense duplicate and replace the entire brass rail.



Broken butt plate



Replacement butt plate

When a butt plate breaks, the break is nearly always in line with the threaded hole which is intended for a machine screw to affix the butt plate to a tongue of the brass rail.

Individual butt plates may be replaced, but if more than a couple have broken the most practical repair may be to replace the complete set while the action is out of the piano. Once done this problem area will be taken care of for the foreseeable future.



Repair clip for broken tongue being installed.

If a tongue of the brass rail has broken, a brass repair clip may be installed (above photo). **Note: If upon inspection the total replacement of the brass rail seems advisable (due to a large number of broken tongues) you will be consulted.**