

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

Focus On: Upright Hammer Replacement

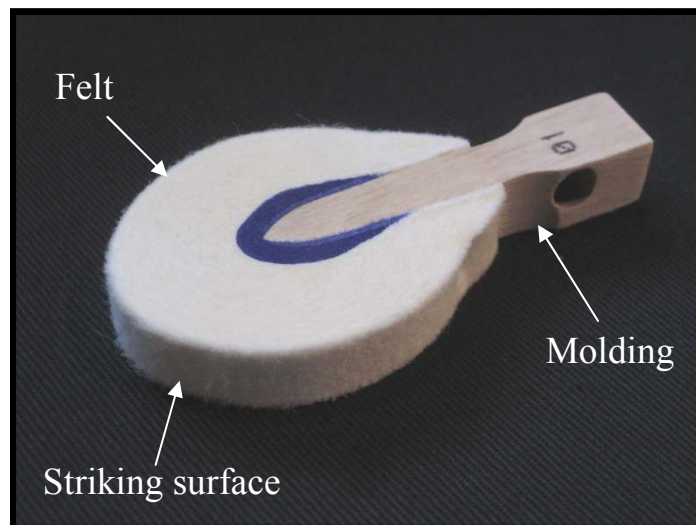


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Although the hammers on an upright piano are extremely durable, they do deteriorate over time, and at some point need to be replaced. Worn hammers may cause the tone of a piano to be harsh and unpleasant and can also make it difficult to control the keys to produce the music you love. **The hammers on your piano are worn to the point where replacement would help bring back beauty and richness to the tone of your instrument.**

Over the years, however, the steel of the treble strings and the copper windings of the bass strings gradually cut into the felt, breaking the felt fibers and resulting in a layer of felt on the outside of the hammers which is pulpy or dead. The piano's tone is altered as this dead layer increases, and eventually the hammers don't produce a clean blow at all, but instead strike the strings with a flattened and grooved surface) which produces an unsatisfactorily harsh sound.



A new hammer head ready to install.

When hammer heads are manufactured, thick, stiff felt is stretched around a wooden core, or molding, at great tension. The striking surface is smooth and round and more or less egg-shaped (see photo above). The tension of the felt provides a bounce to the hammers so that when they strike the strings the deflection that they cause to the strings results in vibration or tone.

Having new hammers installed is an improvement which adds value to the instrument in that the tone of the piano will be vastly improved upon—the piano's voice won't be masked by worn out hammers.

