

Plastic Key Top Replacement

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- For grand pianos keep **keys with key frame** (action stack is not needed for recovering process).
- **Number** keys near the capstan screws.
- **Measure** several keys forward of key bushing for their overall height, and record.
- **Remove old keytops**
 - **To remove ivory**
 - Use heavy bown paper over keytops. With an iron on low to medium setting, heat keytops to loosen glue. Using a felt knife, carefully slide blade under ivory and remove from key. Watch that knife does not “dive” following wood grain of key; if it does, then try removing from opposite direction. If ivory chips during removal, you may be using excessive heat. If removal continues to be very difficult, try a damp cloth over the ivory with iron on low heat, using both heat and steam to remove the ivory.
 - **To remove plastic**
 - Use brown paper over keytops with an iron set on low to medium setting. CAUTION: Some old plastic is very flammable and may ignite with exdccessive heat. Using a knife, carefully remove plastic top from key. Watch that knife does not “dive” along wood grain of key. If plastic becomes very brittle and chips during removal, iron temperature is too high.
 - Ivory and plastic keytops can be removed with a routerr when resurfacing key top surface.
- **Select new keytop** material and measure thickness.
- **Calculate key height** for new plastic keytop.
 - Subtract new plastic keytop thickness from original height and this will give you the height that the key should be routed to before the new kehytops are installed. It is important to keep the overall height as close as possible to the original.
- **Prepare keytop surface** for new plastic key tops
 - **For a routing jig**
 - Use router with a $\frac{3}{4}$ ” carbide bit if old keytop material is being removed. High speed steel bits will cut smoother but will not last long cutting ivory. Install a scrap piece of pine in jig and adjust router depth so that scrap stock is cut to desired new height. Install key in jig and set back stop so that router cuts jkust longer than length of new keytop material. Move router in

clockwise direction over key to remove excess material and prevent “blow out” on sides of key. Once routed, remove keytop and check height to make sure that it matches the desired calculated height. Carefully route all keys. If a key needs repair, fill or fi the damaged area, then route the surface again. All keys should now be the same height.

- **For drill press**

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