

Pedal Exercises

The sustain pedal is used to keep notes sounding after the key is released, allowing you to move your hand to play other notes. In traditional pianos, depressing the pedal moves all the dampers away from the strings, allowing them to keep vibrating. Releasing the pedal drops the dampers back onto the strings, deadening the sound. In keyboards, this effect is produced digitally. Think of it like this:

Pedal down = sustain on

Pedal up = sustain off

Typically you want the pedal 'on' most of the time, releasing it only briefly to get rid of old, unwanted notes before catching new ones. In order to do this, your foot should not come up before the new note is sounded. Instead release the pedal just after it sounds and depress it again immediately to catch the new note, holding it down until the next new note sounds.

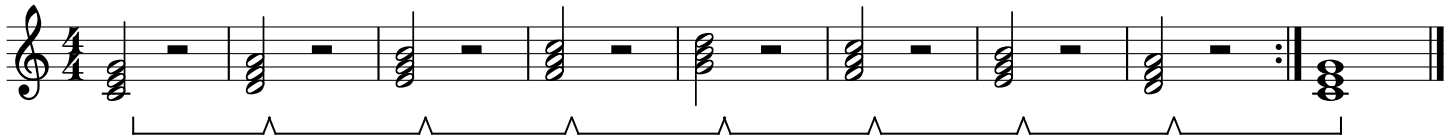
Try it slowly with this first exercise, repeating until you can pedal correctly all the way through:

1



This second exercise is similar to the first, but if you do not release the old chord quickly it will produce a far more discordant sound due to multiple clashing notes. Use this exercise to work on changing pedal as soon after the new chord sounds as possible:

2



The jump of a tenth in the third exercise means you need to change pedal quickly, otherwise, you will lose the first note in the bar. Practice changing pedal with a swift *up-down* motion:

3



This final exercise, made up of *staccato* quavers, requires the quickest pedal changes of all. Start fairly slowly, getting used to playing disjointed notes, then gradually speed up. The aim is to hide the fact you are playing *staccato* - this exercise should sound *legato*:

4

