Independent piano teachers, out of necessity, are facing the prospect of teaching piano lessons remotely for the first time. Many peers have been experimenting with or are already teaching remotely, and we at STEINWAY & SONS want to share some ideas and best practices to help everyone navigate this new era of remotely connecting with your students. In addition, we’re also happy to share links to other thoughtful ideas on remote teaching.

TEACHING SPACES

Whether your students normally travel to your studio or you travel to them, the teaching environment is very important — and video teaching is no different. Consider making your teaching space as functional and user-friendly as possible. Consider your comfort, ergonomics, access to your piano and communication devices, and what your students see on video.

After finding what works best for your studio set-up, you may need to guide your student’s families on their home set-up, and depending on the age of the student, the parent may need to attend the lesson — to be your “eyes, ears, and hands” in the room.
YOUR CONNECTION

To connect your studio to your students in their homes, you need an internet connection and a platform on which to connect.

- **WiFi** — for standard video calls/videoconference technology, 25 Mbps upload and download should suffice. If you are unsure of your connection speed, you can visit [speedtest.net](http://speedtest.net) to find out!

- **Platforms** — there are many free or low-cost ways to connect to students via video.
  
  *Popular free platforms include:*
  - FaceTime
  - Skype
  - WhatsApp
  - WeChat

  Additionally, some video-conference tools, including Zoom, provide extra features not found on the video call services above, though they may charge a recurring fee. Explore each to find which is the best fit for you.

HARDWARE

Some teachers prefer iPads or laptops as the larger screen makes it easier to see the students, while others prefer the convenience and portability of their phones. Choose the device that works best for you.

*Hardware placement* — Placing your device’s camera so your student can see your face clearly during conversation and hands for demonstration is very important. For iPads and laptops, consider a tripod stand or place on a stable surface in a position to show both views. For phones, consider using a tripod or easy-to-use mount that makes it easy to reposition the phone as necessary, [such as this one](https://example.com). Placing the phone on the treble side of the piano — rather than the bass — will make a better aural experience.
Additional hardware — Some teachers who teach remotely add hardware upgrades to their set-up to improve video and audio quality. For laptop users, an external camera can easily improve the clarity of what you share with students. Smartphone and tablet cameras are often high-quality and have greater resolution than laptops. Some teachers add an external microphone for higher quality audio. Consider using headphones to better hear the student’s performance and comments.

LESSON PAYMENT

Remote payment is something many teachers already have experience with. Numerous services allow families to pay teachers remotely from their smartphones, including Venmo, PayPal, ApplePay, and GooglePay. Many banks now offer low or no-cost remote payments via internal services (often running Zelle technology).

SCHEDULING

Just like in-person lessons, clear and accurate communication are key. If sending lesson appointments digitally, some teachers will schedule a half-hour time slot as a twenty-five minute lesson to allow five minutes of break before the next lesson.

RUNNING THE LESSON

Shifting from in-person to online instruction can of course challenging. While many teachers employ the same lesson format for remote learning as in-person, more clear verbal communication may be needed to overcome the lack of physical cues. Experiment and allow yourself time to settle in to the transition. Through trial and error, and a dose of creativity, you can find ways to communicate, inform, and inspire your students remotely!
The STEINWAY online teacher directory has been updated with a new feature! On your directory listing you can now add a “I Teach Online” badge to your profile to let families know that you teach online as well as in person.

To update your profile, visit teacher.steinway.com and click “Teacher Area” at the top of the page to log in and select your badge. Please note that any updates made to your account will result in the page being put in “pending” status until it is reviewed. It will be back online in one-to-two business days.

If you have not created your teacher directory account, visit this link to get started!

If you would like to add any additional badges to your profile, such as the “I Teach on a Steinway” or “I Teach on a Boston” badge, please contact your STEINWAY & SONS representative.

STEINWAY & SONS celebrates teachers who find ways to keep giving the gift and joy of music — needed now more than ever.

Additional Helpful Links:

https://minds-in-bloom.com/distance-learning-keep-your-students-learning-even-when-school-is-closed/
https://verypiano.com/2017/05/16/using-skype-facetime-teach-learn-piano/?cn-reloaded=1
https://busyteacher.org/18427-teaching-remotely-use-these-7-tips-for-teaching.html
https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/09/working-from-home-tips-to-meet-like-a-pro/
https://nafme.org/music-teacher-resources-school-closures/
https://nafme.org/covid-19/