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

Focus On: Replacement of Upright Piano Damper Springs

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The dampers on a upright piano are able to function because of the fact that they are spring-loaded. In a grand piano, where the strings lay flat, the weight of the dampers and their mechanisms keep strings in check when they're not being played. In an upright piano, however, the strings run up and down, so the weight of the dampers does not fall naturally on the strings.

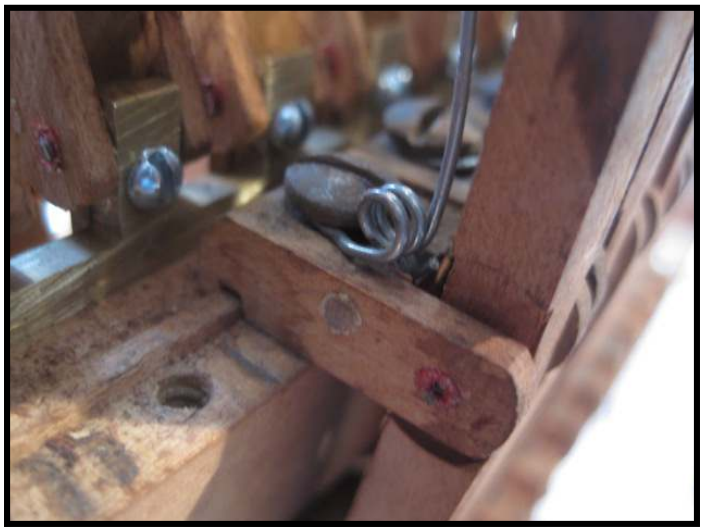
Problems may arise with this system as a piano ages, in that the damper springs tend to weaken with age. As this begins to happen, more of a ringing after-tone may be noticed upon the release of a note or a chord. Combine this with the fact that the dampers themselves are less effective as they age, and the problem can become annoying.

The solution to a weakened set of damper springs is to have them replaced. To do this, the old damper springs are ordinarily clipped off at the base and a new set of springs are installed to take their place.

Hooked into place

Bent into position

The first step to putting in new damper springs is to remove each damper assembly in order to clip the old springs. A flange screw is first backed out. Once the old spring is clipped the damper assembly is returned to the action and a new spring installed. The spring is designed to hook around the flange screw, after which it is bent into position. The end of the spring goes in a felted slot designed to allow the spring to slide freely up and down in as the damper is used.



With a set of replacement damper springs, your piano will have improved damping power. If the new set of springs are combined with new dampers as well, your piano should have a more effective cut-off to sound when the dampers are employed.

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