

Using a Keyboard 105 Two Skippy Six Note Tunes

Improve your finger dexterity, practise using 6 notes by shifting your hand one note to the right and stretching your thumb, and follow fingering numbers to play a tune

You need a real keyboard

1. “Pop Goes the Weasel”. This tune uses 6 notes, but note no 6 only comes once – on the word “pop”. It’s a very jumpy tune, so your fingers are going to have a good workout. It has a jumpy rhythm too, which will be a nice change from the walk-like rhythm of “Frère Jacques”. “Pop goes the Weasel” skips along – tum-ti-tum-ti-ti-di-ey tum. Try Youtube if you don’t know the tune.

Arrange your right hand in a keyboard playing position above a table and, with your wrist relaxed, tap out the rhythm of the tune with all your fingers.

<i>Half a pound of</i>	<i>tup – pen – ny rice</i>	<i>half a pound of</i>	<i>trea - cle.</i>
<i>That’s the way the</i>	<i>mo – o - ney goes,</i>	<i>pop goes the</i>	<i>wea - sel.</i>

Check that you can understand why for the purposes of this activity, the word “money” has got an extra “o” in it.

2. So far, your fingers have had to move by step or make a stretchy jump. Now they have the challenge of working in a more complicated sequence:

1	3	2	4	3	5	3	1
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It’s up two, back one, up two, back one, up two and then jump back down. A sort of zig-zag.

Start with your thumb on note 1 – the same as for “Frère Jacques”.

The finger numbers are the same as the note numbers.

Practise playing the pattern until you can do it fluently.

3. The pattern you’ve learned to play is the one you need for both “*Half a pound of tuppenny rice*” and “*That’s the way the money goes*”. (That’s why there’s the extra syllable in money – it’s a two syllable word with three notes.)

You need to work out how to play “*half a pound of treacle*”. It starts the same way as the pattern you’ve learned but isn’t quite the same at the end. By singing or playing, compare the two patterns.

4. Just the last phrase to do now: “*pop goes the weasel*”. This is where you need note 6, so stretch your little finger one note to the right while your hand stays in the same place. The finger numbers are on the top in bold and the pitch numbers underneath. Check you are clear with how the numbers relate to each other before playing.

5	2	4	3	1
6	2	4	3	1
<i>pop</i>	<i>goes</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>wea -</i>	<i>sel</i>

5. Practise the tune until your fingers co-operate.

6. The nursery rhyme “Girls and boys come out to play” has the same skipping rhythm as “Pop goes the Weasel”, and the zig-zag pattern, but upside down. Only 5 notes this time, so fingering and pitch numbers are the same.

5	3	4	2	5	3	1	1	2	3	4	3	2	5	3	1
<i>Girls and boys come</i>	<i>out</i>	<i>to play</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>moon</i>	<i>doth</i>	<i>shine</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>bright</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>day.</i>					