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Choosing a digital piano

A buyer's guide

Why a digital piano?

Digital pianos are more popular than ever before, because using modern technology they so closely replicate the sound and feel of traditional pianos that most people cannot tell the difference anymore.

Then there are the practical reasons why digital pianos are proving more popular than ever today, see below:

Digital pianos never go out of tune or need any maintenance (traditional pianos need tuning often and need regulated environments)

Digital pianos have volume control and can be used with headphones (traditional pianos cannot be 'turned down' so practice might disturb neighbours or family)

Digital pianos are easy to lift and transport (traditional pianos are very heavy and dangerous to move unless by experts)

What kind of digital piano do I need?

You will have noticed there are many different types of digital piano. The type of piano you need depends partly on what type of music you want to play and partly on your practical situation i.e. you might live in a small flat or a large detached house. Have a look at our video (below) where Chris explains the differences between the Yamaha CLP (classic) and CVP (versatile) models.

[Watch our CVP vs CLP Quick Guide video by clicking here](#)

If you simply want to play piano in the normal way then a **classic digital** would suit you. A **classic digital** is a piano that feels, sounds and plays just like a traditional piano but doesn't do too much else. They are designed to be simple, straightforward to operate and usually look a little like traditional pianos too.

Examples of a **classic** digital piano:



Yamaha CLP Clavinova



YDP Arius



Yamaha P Series

Examples of a **versatile** digital piano:



Yamaha CVP Clavinova



Yamaha DGX Series

[Chris produced a great video explaining what the CVP series offers - watch by clicking here](#)

So those are the main two types of digital piano; **classic** and **versatile**. As for which one is right for you depends on how you want to learn. If you want to learn in the traditional way with music books and just a simple piano then clearly the classical digital will be your best bet. But if you don't mind using modern technology (like touch screens) to make learning a bit more exciting and engaging then the versatile digital is for you

Rhythms and accompaniments

This is like having a band playing along with you while you play. The technology is very effective in giving you the thrilling experience of playing with a whole group and there are hundreds of different styles to choose from.



Hundreds of extra instruments

As well as the regular piano you have a massive selection of instruments to choose from like orchestral strings, guitars, organs, brass and woodwind, synths. All allowing you to bring far more variation to your playing than a piano alone.



Multi track recording

The versatile digital pianos have professional quality recording studios built in, but luckily they are very simple to use. You can build up a whole song from scratch using whichever instruments you like. Or build up a whole symphony orchestra instrument by instrument. And sharing your recordings to a computer is so easy using wireless or USB sticks.



Learning facilities

These pianos will actually teach you to play! – There are tutorial features built in that will cater for all levels. With the large screen displays it's easy to follow instructions including musical notes. There is even a wonderful feature for kids and total beginners where keys are lit up and the music waits for you to play correctly.

How does a digital piano work?

Most digital pianos work by taking a recorded sample from a traditional piano and amplifying it through built in speakers.

But it's not as simple as you might imagine. In order to accurately simulate the true sound of piano hundreds of samples must be taken, not just of the desired note being played but also the variations in strength and sympathetic vibrations of surrounding strings and the cabinet of the piano too.

Yamaha have a rich heritage in making world class grand pianos so they are experts at capturing the required sounds.

Digital piano FAQ.

Are digital pianos as good as "real" pianos? Most people cannot tell the difference between traditional pianos and digital pianos today. This is because modern technology is so advanced that digital pianos can replicate the touch and feel of 'real' pianos so accurately.

Do the keys feel real? Yes. The keys on digital pianos are 'weighted' so the way they feel to play and react to your input is just like the real thing. Don't think that digital pianos feel and sound like that old Casio keyboard you got for Christmas in 1986.

Do they need tuning? No. Digital pianos never go out tune, so never need tuning.

Do they have the right amount of keys? Yes. Most digital pianos have the standard 88 keys.

Can I wear headphones to practice? Yes. When you plug headphones into a digital piano the speakers are disabled so only you can hear the sound. This is ideal for practicing late at night or when you don't want to disturb anyone. Note: The standard jack socket for headphones is 6.35mm. iPhone headphone plugs are 3.5mm so you would need an adaptor. Most of our digital pianos come with headphones and the adaptor anyway.

Why do digital piano prices vary so much? The price of a digital piano depends on a number of factors, for example whether the keys are plastic or wooden, whether the speakers are big or small, the amount of extra features it has like rhythms and backings or multi track recordings. The cabinet design and finish is a factor too. Small portable pianos tend to be cheaper than the more traditional looking non-portable ones.

Can I connect my iPhone/iPad? Many of the Yamaha digital pianos and keyboards allow connection to an iPad/tablet now for various purposes. Yamaha have developed a lot of apps for their instruments, you can read more about them on the App Store.

What about other manufacturers of digital piano? We are an independent shop but choose Yamaha digital pianos exclusively because they are the best regarded in the world. You will find Yamaha digital pianos in most music schools, colleges and universities, and teachers nearly always recommend Yamaha because of how authentic the touch and sound is.

Will a digital piano help me pass exams? Yes, Yamaha also manufacture some of the world's finest concert grand pianos and have a rich heritage over 100 years making pianos. The technology they have developed is shared into the design of their digital pianos to make them the most authentic digital pianos in the world. Therefore when you practice on a Yamaha digital piano it will prepare your technique for passing exams.