

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

Focus On: Replacing Upright Hammer Butt Springs



Information provided courtesy of:

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Hammer butt (or hammer rail) springs perform an essential function in the action of the vertical piano. Each time a note is played, the hammer must swiftly return to rest position. The hammer butt spring is responsible for this task. Although these springs are simple in design and typically need no maintenance over the life of a piano, they can be easily bent or knocked out of position. In some cases, the spring metal becomes brittle and breakage occurs. When this happens, broken springs may either be replaced individually or as a set. **The hammer butt springs on your piano are showing signs of brittleness, and either spot replacement or the replacement of the entire set should be considered.**

For an on-the-spot replacement, a hammer butt repair spring may be used to replace a broken spring. The repair spring has a brass clip that may be screwed onto the hammer spring rail, as shown in the photo at the top of the next column.

Repair springs are an acceptable and affordable option which is most appropriate when a limited number of springs are being replaced. For a quality restoration, however, the use of original-type hammer butt springs (as shown in the photo below) would be a better choice. By doing so the new springs would most closely match the piano's original specifications. Also, by replacing the entire set of springs instead of just those actually broken, future problems caused by brittle spring metal would be eliminated.



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