

# A Survival Guide for Small-handed Pianists

## – An Application of Taubman Technique

MTNA@FSU Collegiate Chapter  
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### Taubman Technique

- Dorothy Taubman (1917-2013)
- American Piano Pedagogue
- Basic Concepts
  - Forearm Rotation
  - In and Out
  - Walking Arm



### Forearm Rotation Diagram Right Hand

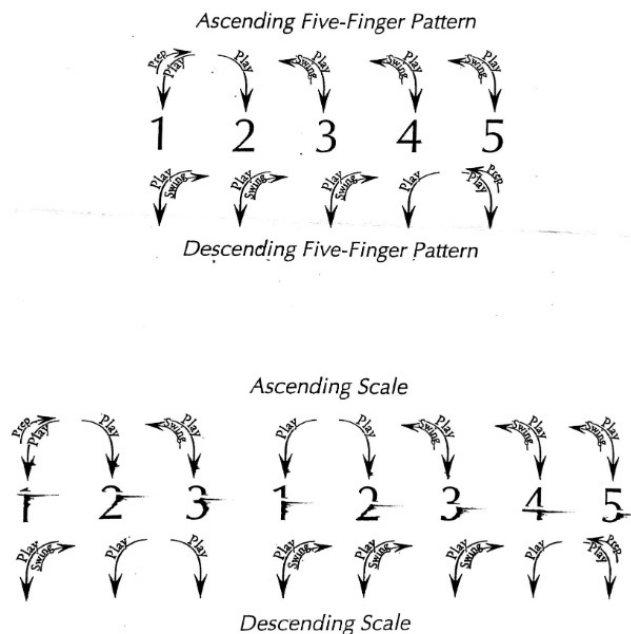


Figure 1. Forearm Rotation Diagram  
(adapted from 2016 The Dorothy Taubman  
Seminar Fundamentals and Musical  
Examples at Temple University)

**Example:** Mozart Sonata in G Major, K. 283, M. 16-22

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in G Major, K. 283, measures 16-22. The score is written for piano and is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system begins with a piano introduction marked 'Ep. ZwS.' and a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system continues the melodic line in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand, with a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The third system concludes the passage with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, ornaments, and dynamic markings.

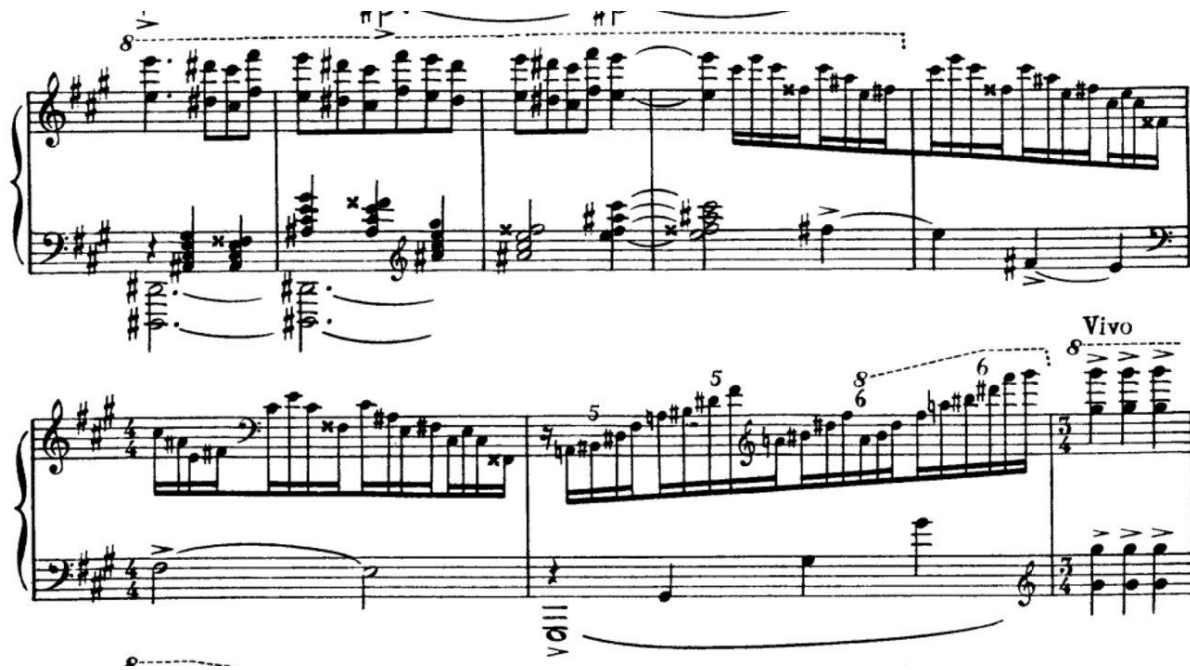
**Challenges**

- Fatigue
- Power and Reach

**General Suggestions to Survive**

- Grouping & muscle relaxation
- Use body levers and muscles appropriately
- Synchronization - cultivate finger-to-elbow alignment

**Example:** Villa Lobos Impressões Seresteiras, No. 2



**Step by Step Guide to learning this passage**

- 1) Choose appropriate fingering
  - a) Keep fingertip to elbow alignment
  - b) Limit hand position changes
- 2) Analyze and divide into groups based on hand position changes
- 3) Practice groups with slight break in between to give muscles chance to release
- 4) Combine adjacent groups (still keeping muscle release in mind)
- 5) Apply rubato and different levers as appropriate

## More Suggestions

- Redistribution and Strategic Omission of Notes

**Example:** Vidal Trumpet Concertino in F



- Re-fingering

**Example:** Chopin Etude Op. 10, No. 1

Chopin: 1 2 4 5 1 2 4 5 1 2 4 5 1 2 4 5 4 2 1  
 Alternate 3: 1 2 4 5 3 1 3 5 3 1  
 Alternate 2: 1 3 5 4 2 1 2 4 2 1  
 Alternate 1: (1 3 5) 2 1 3 5 2 1 3 5 2 1 3 5 3 1 3 5 3 1

8va

legato

LH?

Rco.

LH?

\*

From Adaptive Strategies for Small-handed Pianists by Lora Deahl & Brenda Wristen

- Early Release of Notes/Use of Pedal

**Example:** Schubert Impromptu in G-flat, Op. 90, No. 3



- Adopting the Right Mentality
    - Focus on the right execution
    - Be sensitive to any excess tension
    - Anticipation of strain might lead to its physical manifestation
    - No pain no gain? Not necessary
    - Size doesn't matter – sound matters
- 

## More Resources about Taubman Technique

- Book
  - *Adaptive Strategies for Small-handed Pianists* (Lora Deahl & Brenda Wrysten)
- Video
  - *Virtuosity in a box: the Taubman Techniques*
    - 10 videos
    - Lecture by Edna Golandsky
    - Master classes by Dorothy Taubman
  - *Choreography of the Hands: The Work of Dorothy Taubman*
    - <https://youtu.be/lP1nofzv8j4>
- YouTube Channels
  - Dorothy Taubman Seminar at Temple University
    - <https://www.youtube.com/@dorothytaubmanseminarattem7979>
  - The Golandsky Institute
    - <https://www.youtube.com/@TheGolandskyInstitute>
- Seminars
  - The Dorothy Taubman Seminar at Temple University
    - <https://www.taubmanseminar.com/>
  - The Golandsky Institute Symposium
    - <https://www.golandskyinstitute.org/>

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