

Guide to Playing Diminished Seventh Arpeggios

for ABRSM Grade 8 Piano - © Fergus Black 2011

Start with Hanon's exercise for diminished sevenths - No. 42 - page 69 in the Schirmer edition. The main difficulty for most pianists seems to be using all four fingers in an arpeggio, keeping the hand extension needed - all the Hanon diminished sevenths start on white notes, and have the following fingering pattern, with the thumbs together on the first quaver of each group of four.

As with all scales and arpeggios, play legato - for the pianist that means joining the bottoms of the notes together.

$\text{♩} = 66$ in the recommended minimum speed for ABRSM Grade 8.

The following diminished sevenths all fall into the same category: they start on black notes, and the thumbs of the two hands are on different white notes.

N.B. I have shown the fingering pattern for multiple octaves. You can substitute a more convenient finger for the opening black notes of the right hand, using the 2nd finger instead of the 4th in the c# arpeggio, for example.

For the diminished seventh arpeggio starting on c#, remember that 3rd and 4th fingers are on b \flat and c#. This is also the case for the dim 7th starting on b \flat : they are essentially the same arpeggio, after all, it's just that they start on different notes.

For the diminished seventh arpeggio starting on e \flat , remember that 3rd and 4th fingers are on e \flat and on f \sharp . Also for the dim 7th starting on f \sharp .

Musical notation for a diminished seventh arpeggio starting on e \flat . The tempo is marked as quarter note = 66. The piece consists of four measures. The first measure shows the arpeggio in both hands with fingerings: right hand (3, 4, 1, 2) and left hand (4, 3, 2, 1). The second measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The third measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The fourth measure ends with a whole rest in both hands.

Musical notation for a diminished seventh arpeggio starting on f \sharp . The tempo is marked as quarter note = 66. The piece consists of four measures. The first measure shows the arpeggio in both hands with fingerings: right hand (4, 1, 2, 3) and left hand (3, 2, 1, 4). The second measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The third measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The fourth measure ends with a whole rest in both hands.

For the diminished seventh arpeggios starting on a \flat , keep the 4th fingers of both hands together on a \flat .

Musical notation for a diminished seventh arpeggio starting on a \flat . The tempo is marked as quarter note = 66. The piece consists of four measures. The first measure shows the arpeggio in both hands with fingerings: right hand (4, 1, 2, 3) and left hand (4, 3, 2, 1). The second measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The third measure continues the arpeggio in both hands. The fourth measure ends with a whole rest in both hands.