

DIY Silent Mini Keyboards

Materials:

- 1 package of 6 wooden slats (each piece measures approx. 7 x 3 inches and 1/4 inch thick; these packages are available at craft stores for about \$3).
- white acrylic paint
- small paintbrush
- an ultra fine tipped black permanent marker
- ruler
- clear lacquer spray / acrylic spray
- pair of scissors
- 1 sheet of extra thick black foam
- clear silicone adhesive/glue (less smelly than other strong glues, although other glues may work just as well.)



Instructions:

- Paint each piece of wood using 2-3 coats of white paint, as needed.
- After the paint dries, use the thin black permanent marker and a ruler to draw the lines between the white keys on each white board (to form 12 equally-sized white keys).
- Coat all sides of the wood pieces using the acrylic spray, following the directions indicated on the can.
- Cut 1cm x 4cm rectangles out of the foam sheet. You will need a total of 48 black keys for 6 keyboards. Use the clear silicone adhesive to glue the black keys to the wooden boards in groups of 2's and 3's.

A few quick examples of ways to use silent keyboards:

- **Introducing keyboard topography to groups of preschool / pre-piano students:** Ask them to cover the black key group of two with fingers 2 and 3. Then ask them to find Middle C and other notes. They can even "play" beginner songs together in rhythm on their mini keyboards.
- **A reference tool when teaching theory:** Students can find and "play" chords on their mini keyboard in front of them as needed while you are teaching or they are completing a worksheet. Or, students could also use glass gems to form chords, five-finger patterns, etc.