

## What Are Key Touch Extensions?

**Key touch extensions** are simple, removable adaptations added to an instrument's keys or controls to make them easier to press. They work by **increasing the surface area** of a key or lever, reducing the need for precise fingertip placement. This can make a significant difference for students with limited fine motor control, tremors, low muscle tone, or difficulty isolating individual fingers.

Instead of needing to press a small metal key perfectly, the student presses a **larger, softer, more forgiving surface** that still activates the instrument correctly. The goal is not to change the instrument's sound or function, but to **remove a physical barrier to access**.



## What Are Key Touch Extensions Made From?

Key touch extensions are typically made using **low-cost, classroom-safe materials**, such as:

- Foam tubing or craft foam
- Moldable silicone putty (such as Sugru)

- Rubber or silicone grips
- Velcro tabs or dots

These materials can be shaped or sized to meet a student's specific needs and are usually **temporary and removable**, making them safe for school-owned instruments.

## Who Benefits from Key Touch Extensions?

Key touch extensions can be helpful for students who:

- Have limited finger isolation or hand strength
- Experience tremors or fatigue
- Have cerebral palsy or other motor coordination challenges
- Use adaptive straps or supports
- Become frustrated by missed or leaking keys

By reducing the physical precision required, students are often able to focus more on **air, rhythm, and musical participation**, rather than fighting the mechanics of the instrument.

## Important Safety Notes

- Always test adaptations **without permanent adhesives** first
- Ensure extensions do not interfere with neighboring keys
- Use removable materials whenever possible
- Collaborate with an occupational therapist when available

Key touch extensions should support independence and success without damaging the instrument or limiting future skill development.

## Why This Matters in Band

Small physical barriers can quickly turn into frustration, avoidance, or disengagement. Key touch extensions are a simple example of how **changing the environment—not the expectation—can dramatically improve access and confidence** for students with additional needs.