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# Musculoskeletal Health and Injury Prevention in Musicians

# Me

- Why am I talking to you...what makes me qualified to discuss music and health?
- I'm not a musician – I'm an exercise physiologist
- Background in hospital wellness and chronic disease management and prevention
  - Musculoskeletal health is what I do every day
  - Injury prevention is one of the keys to preventing chronic health problems

# Why are we talking about this?

- Are musicians really a high risk group?
- How do you compare with other professions?
- What's my motivation?
  - What does musculoskeletal health have to do with music?
  - Should I really be concerned about injuring myself?

# Musicians do it all!

- Music professionals are at high risk of injury and health problems
- It's the nature of your work
  - Sitting for long periods
  - Computer/technical work
  - Standing for long periods
  - Repetitive movements
  - Awkward equipment
  - Hauling/moving equipment
  - Long hours
  - Shifting schedules

# What's my motivation?

- How can good musculoskeletal health affect my work?
  - Improved health prevents acute and chronic illnesses
  - Improved performance of your chosen career
  - Reduced limitations
  - Improved endurance
  - Enhanced creativity

# What do I need to know about Musculoskeletal Health?

- It's a decision you make every day
- Musculoskeletal health is an investment
  - In yourself as a person
  - In your career/profession
  - I challenge you to find any very successful person in any field that does not have a commitment to personal health
  - Health and success are intricately linked

# It all starts with good habits

- Not again...
- The same old advice:
  - Good nutrition
  - Adequate sleep
  - Stress management
  - Disease/illness prevention
  - Exercise\*\*\*
- But now let's look at it in a new light – how can it improve your performance?

# Exercise and the Musician

- Think back to our job description from earlier
- What do we need our bodies to be capable of doing?
- What physiological needs do we have?
  - Endurance
  - Strength (particularly core and upper back strength)
  - Flexibility
- Building your exercise program around those needs



# KISS

- Keep it simple...
- The basic exercise guidelines cover most of what you need
- What are those guidelines?
  - Cardiovascular work 3 days a week (20-30 min)
  - Strength and flexibility work 2-3 days/week
  - Little more emphasis on core strength than the average person
- You can do it all in 3-4 hours per week
- For some the basics are enough...some of you might need more

# What's the best form of exercise?

- One of the most common questions I get
- The best form is the one you're going to actually do?
- Pick forms of exercise that meet your needs and that you enjoy (or at least tolerate better than others)
- Work with a professional!

# What do I need to know about Injury Prevention?

- Understand that “injuries” occur in every field
- Redefine what injuries are to you
  - For our purposes, an injury is any musculoskeletal condition that affects your ability to perform any aspect of your job or day to day life
  - Range from barely noticeable to crippling
- Appreciate that injuries affect your work whether you want to acknowledge it or not

# The number one thing to remember

- Awareness is the key
- You cannot prevent every injury
- You can get injured even when doing things right simply due to the nature
- It all comes down to one rule

**THINK ABOUT WHAT  
YOU'RE DOING!**

# Ergonomics and Music

- Choose carefully the positions you put your body in
- There's no way to cover every possible aspect of ergonomics in a semester, much less one presentation
- Some highlights
  - Body positioning when sitting or standing
  - Body positioning when lifting/carrying
  - Move, move, move

# Let's wrap it up

- You've chosen a dangerous profession from a physiological standpoint
- Good health and musculoskeletal strength is important to your success
- Awareness of risks and good habits helps minimize your risk

# Let's talk...

- Question me.
- Challenge me.
- Let's make it meaningful to you!