

## HEALTH AND SAFETY IN MUSIC

There are health and safety risks inherent in practice, performance, teaching, and listening to music both in general and as applicable to specific specializations. The Whitworth University Music Department is committed to guarding against injury and illness in the study and practice of music, as well as raising awareness of the connection between musicians' health, the suitability and safety of equipment and technology, and the acoustic and other health-related conditions in the university's practice, rehearsal, and performance facilities.

Health and safety depends largely on personal decisions made by informed individuals. Whitworth University has health and safety responsibilities, but fulfillment of these responsibilities cannot and will not ensure any individual's health and safety. Each individual is personally responsible for avoiding risk and preventing injuries to themselves before, during, and after study or employment in the music department.

The Whitworth Music Department seeks to educate students, faculty, and staff in a variety of ways including attention to pertinent health and safety topics in ensemble rehearsals and music performance labs, and providing resources on this site and in the music office. Listed below are guidelines and resources on a variety of health and safety topics of importance to musicians. At the end of each section, there is a reference to further resources available on the NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) website. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to review these topics regularly.

### Hearing Health

- Hearing health is essential to your lifelong success as a musician.
- Noise-induced hearing loss is largely preventable. You must avoid overexposure to loud sounds, especially for long periods of time.
- The closer you are to the source of a loud sound, the greater the risk of damage to your hearing mechanisms.
- Sounds over 85 dB (your typical vacuum cleaner) in intensity pose the greatest risk to your hearing.
- Risk of hearing loss is based on a combination of sound or loudness intensity and duration.
- Recommended maximum daily exposure times (NIOSH) to sounds at or above 85 dB are as follows:
  - 85 dB (vacuum cleaner, MP3 player through earbuds at 1/3 volume) – 8 hours
  - 90 dB (blender, hair dryer) – 2 hours
  - 94 dB (MP3 player at 1/2 volume) – 1 hour
  - 100 dB (MP3 player at full volume, lawnmower) – 15 minutes
  - 110 dB (rock concert, power tools) – 2 minutes
  - 120 dB (jet planes at take-off) – without ear protection, hearing damage is almost immediate
- Certain behaviors (controlling volume levels in practice and rehearsal, avoiding noisy environments, turning down the volume) reduce your risk of hearing loss. Be mindful of those MP3 earbuds.

The use of earplugs and earmuffs helps to protect your hearing health.

- Day-to-day decisions can impact your hearing health, both now and in the future. Since sound exposure occurs in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own hearing health on a daily basis.
- If you are concerned about your personal hearing health, talk with a medical professional.
- If you are concerned about your hearing health in relationship to your program of study, consult the coordinator of your area.
- This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the NASM Web site on hearing health at [http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA\\_Hearing\\_Health](http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA_Hearing_Health).

### **Neuromusculoskeletal Health**

- Neuromusculoskeletal health is essential to your lifelong success as a musician.
- Practicing and performing music is physically demanding.
- Musicians are susceptible to numerous neuromusculoskeletal disorders.
- Some musculoskeletal disorders are related to behavior; others are genetic; still others are the result of trauma or injury. Some genetic conditions can increase a person's risk of developing certain behavior-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders.
- Many neuromusculoskeletal disorders and conditions are preventable and/or treatable.
- Sufficient physical and musical warm-up time is important.
- Good posture and correct physical technique are essential.
- Regular breaks during practice and rehearsal are vital in order to prevent undue physical stress and strain.
- It is important to set a reasonable limit on the amount of time that you will practice in a day.
- Avoid sudden increases in practice times.
- Know your body and its limits, and avoid "overdoing it."
- Maintain healthy habits. Safeguard your physical and mental health.
- Day-to-day decisions can impact your neuromusculoskeletal health, both now and in the future. Since muscle and joint strains and a myriad of other injuries can occur in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own neuromusculoskeletal health on a daily basis, particularly with regard to your performing medium and area of specialization.
- If you are concerned about your personal neuromusculoskeletal health, talk with a medical professional.
- If you are concerned about your neuromusculoskeletal health in relationship to your program of study, consult the coordinator of your area.
- This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the NASM Web site on neuromusculoskeletal health at <http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA+Advisories+on+Neuromusculoskeletal+and+Vocal+Health>.

- Vocal health is important for all musicians and essential to lifelong success for singers.
- Understanding basic care of the voice is essential for musicians who speak, sing, and rehearse or teach others.
- Practicing, rehearsing, and performing music is physically demanding.
- Many vocal disorders and conditions are preventable and/or treatable.
- Sufficient warm-up time is important.
- Begin warming up mid-range, and then slowly work outward to vocal pitch extremes.
- Good posture, adequate breath support, and correct physical technique are essential.
- Regular breaks during practice and rehearsal are vital in order to prevent undue physical or vocal stress and strain.
- It is important to set a reasonable limit on the amount of time that you will practice in a day.
- Avoid sudden increases in practice times.
- Know your voice and its limits, and avoid overdoing it or misusing it.
- Maintain healthy habits. Safeguard your physical and mental health.
- Drink plenty of water in order to keep your vocal folds adequately lubricated. Limit your use of alcohol, and avoid smoking.
- Day-to-day decisions can impact your vocal health, both now and in the future. Since vocal strain and a myriad of other injuries can occur in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own vocal health on a daily basis. Avoid shouting, screaming, or other strenuous vocal use.
- If you are concerned about your personal vocal health, talk with a medical professional.
- If you are concerned about your vocal health in relationship to your program of study, consult the coordinator of your area.
- • This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the NASM Web site on vocal health at <http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA+Advisories+on+Neuromusculoskeletal+and+Vocal+Health>.

## **Performance Injuries**

Anyone who sings or plays an instrument has the potential to suffer injury related to that activity. It is the responsibility of singers and instrumentalists to be aware of and seek to prevent potential injuries in their area, and address them immediately when they do occur. The following resources are available in the music office for faculty, staff, and students to consult as needed:

- Conable, Barbara. *What Every Musicians Needs to Know About the Body* (GIA Publications, 2000)
- Horvath, Janet. *Playing Less Hurt* (Horvath, 2006)
- Klickstein, Gerald. *The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness* (Oxford, 2009)
- Norris, Richard N. *The Musician's Survival Manual*(International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, 1993)