

Health and Safety Information

This page contains information about your health and safety as they relate to activities undertaken in the Music Area of the Department of Performing Arts.

Your hearing: Auditory health is possibly the most important of all health concerns for a musician. As a musician you are defined by your ability to hear. Without the ability to hear you are severely handicapped in performance. What can you do to insure that your hearing will remain healthy throughout your years at the university, and later as you embark on some type of profession or avocation in music?

- In the classroom
 - Avoid direct seating proximity to loud audio
 - Inform your professor if the audio is too loud
- In your performing ensemble
 - Wear ear protection. A good set of custom earplugs is a great investment in your health. If you can't afford them there are inexpensive alternatives.
 - In the band and orchestra rehearsal room clear Plexiglas sound shields are available. You have the right to insist that they be strategically placed to block excess sound of loud instruments that are behind you.
 - See the following websites for more information on protecting your hearing.
- In your daily life
 - If you use earbuds or headphones to listen to music be careful not to crank the volume up to the point where others can hear it.
 - Keep the bass level of your music down to the point where you hear it but don't feel it.
 - In other words, protect your ears, you can't buy replacements.
http://hearinghealthfoundation.org/curing_hearing_loss
<http://hearinghealthmatters.org/>

Vocal health: Almost every voice student and/or member of a vocal ensemble has experienced some type of vocal health issues. Lack of attention to these issues can result in problems ranging from minor discomfort to a complete breakdown of the vocal apparatus. What can you do to insure that your voice is protected as you sing?

- Warm up your vocal apparatus before you launch into that Puccini aria or Sondheim tune.
- Know when to stop. Don't continue to sing when your voice is tired or your throat is sore. This is especially important when you practice. Your voice can only work at a high level for so long. Give it a rest.
- Practice correct breath control so you are not straining your vocal apparatus.
- Consult with your teacher immediately when you experience a problem. Your teacher has the training and expertise to help guide you.
- If problems persist, see a medical doctor.
- See the following websites for more information on protecting your voice.
<http://www.texasvoicecenter.com/advice.html>
<http://www.livescience.com/4078-10-tips-healthy-voice.html>
<http://www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/Tips-for-Healthy-Voices.cfm>

Your physical body's health: This site is not intended to give you all the answers to the physical problems that plague musicians. Regardless of your music specialty, good physical health is important to enable you to perform at the top of your game.. The following broad points are meant as a guide to point you to further exploration.

- General Health.
 - Sleep enough to avoid “running on fumes.”
 - Eat correctly. It doesn't take any more time to eat healthy food than it does to eat junk food, it just means planning ahead. Your body will thank you.
 - Don't engage in unhealthy pursuits. Drugs and nicotine are stupid, and they will destroy your health.
 - When you use a music stand light be sure it is positioned so you can see the music without straining your eyes.
 - The Department of Performing Arts recently installed new light fixtures that minimize glare and reflection.
- Posture, the single most important thing! No matter what you do as a musician, poor posture puts excess strain on parts of your body.
 - Stand straight and let your spine, not your back muscles carry your weight. This is important always, not just when you are practicing or performing. Ditch the backpack and don't slouch when you walk.
 - Sit up straight. Don't slouch in your chair as you play your instrument or sing.
 - Be sure your music stand is at a height that allows you to see the music without bending or stretching.
- Muscles
 - Warm up your muscles before you practice or play.
 - Avoid repetitive action overuse problems.
 - If you use a computer keyboard be sure you don't allow your wrists to drop below your fingers. This is one of the most common causes of carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.
 - Don't overuse your muscles. Stop what you are doing and rest when your body is tired.
 - Don't be a couch potato; exercise! You will live longer and be healthier.
 - See the following websites for more information on keeping your body healthy.
<http://ergonomics.about.com/od/music/a/ergomusicians.htm>
<http://haroldgibbons.com/2010/04/25/posture-and-musicians/>
<http://blog.music-made-easy.com/how-posture-affects-your-music>
<http://brassmusician.com/posture-and-breathing-by-mike-white/>
<http://www.musicianshealth.com/weight.htm>
http://www.uic.edu/sph/glakes/harts1/HARTS_library/musicms.txt
<http://www.pianisttopianist.com/?p=34>

Injury prevention: Here are a few things to look for, to do and not do, to help you avoid injury.

- As a musician you routinely spend time in dimly lit backstage areas. Exercise caution so you don't become an “injury statistic.”
- In the classroom, the rehearsal room, and on stage, be sure you note the position of chairs, stands, sound shields, instrument cases, and other items that are a tripping hazard.

- Move instruments and equipment in a way that doesn't compromise your physical wellbeing.
- To reiterate, warm up before you perform.
- See the following websites for more information on injury prevention.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/Injury/>
- <http://www.injuryfree.com/>
- <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/safetyhealth/>

Safety on the campus:

The law requires that any university building be vacated as quickly as possible in the event of a fire. Please be sure you are aware of the exits closest to your classes or rehearsals, and upon hearing a fire alarm, vacate the building immediately.

It is a good idea to initiate a discussion about overall disaster preparedness in your classes. Talk to your faculty advisor and course instructors and find out what should be done in the event a disaster should strike while you are at the university. For basic disaster preparedness information visit the following site.

<http://community.weber.edu/earthquake/whattodo.html>

The following websites address general student health concerns at WSU.

<http://weber.edu/healthcenter/>

<http://weber.edu/healthcenter/general-health-websites.html>

<http://www.weber.edu/studentwellness/>

<http://weber.edu/CounselingCenter/>

http://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/6-10_StudentAlcoDrug.html

http://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/6-14_StudentHealthCtr.html