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## **Assessing Music Students' Injuries and Preventative Measures for the Pre-Collegiate Teacher**

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### **School of Music, Theatre & Dance Wellness Initiative**

The SMTD Wellness Initiative, created in Fall 2016, serves the school in the following ways:

#### **Prevention**

We offer workshops geared towards prevention of musculoskeletal injuries, hearing conservation and vocal health. Through a partnership with MedSport, we provide musculoskeletal and neurological screenings for all incoming freshmen. A new partnership with Michigan Audiology brings hearing screenings to SMTD and Marching Band students.

#### **Education**

Wellness courses combined with not-for-credit classes, such as drop-in meditation, provide our students with the tools they need to support their physical and mental well-being. Courses available include Yoga for Performers, Alexander Technique, Wellness for the Performing Artist, and Contemplative Practices.

#### **Recovery support**

The on-site Performing Arts Health Clinic, offered in partnership with MedSport and MPerform, provides students the opportunity to meet with either a MedSport clinician or a hand specialist to discuss any pain, injury, or discomfort. These one-on-one appointments help students with identifying sources of pain and any postural misalignments. Students are given individualized exercise and stretching plans. Referrals for further treatment are provided on an as-needed basis.

An embedded Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) counselor within SMTD supports students' mental health. CAPS provides brief individual, couples, and group therapy, drop-in workshops and outreach presentations, urgent/crisis intervention, psychiatric evaluation and medication monitoring in conjunction with ongoing therapy and assistance with referrals.

#### **Faculty and Staff support**

Weekly yoga classes, drop-in meditation, and weekly walking groups are some of the wellness offerings created to meet the needs of our faculty and staff. The Wellness Initiative works closely with MHealthy and the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at SMTD to provide wellness workshops and professional development opportunities for staff.

## **Partnership with MedSport**

Key services:

- 1) Postural Assessments
- 2) Performing Arts Health Clinic

Common areas of tightness in musicians:

Prolonged seated posture—upper and lower extremity adaptations

Anterior:

UE: pectoralis major and minor, anterior and middle scalene and SCM (shortened)

LE: iliopsoas, rectus femoris, rectus abdominis (shortened)

Posterior:

UE: upper trapezius, levator scapulae, cervical paraspinals (shortened) vs. rhomboid major and minor, and thoracic paraspinals (lengthened)

LE: Gluteus maximus and medius (lengthened) vs. hamstrings, gastrocnemius (shortened)

## **Prevention for the Pre-Collegiate Student**

Common areas of misalignment:

Head/neck

Lifted shoulders

Pelvis tucked under/pelvis tipped forward

Ulnar/radial deviation

Collapsed knuckles

Foot position relative to knee/hip/pelvis/trunk

Common poor movement habits:

Lacking 'release'

Disorganized patterns

Torso not supporting arms

Restricting breath

Playing from the forearms/wrists/fingers (vs. shoulders)

## Warm-up/Cool down

Visit [smt.d.umich.edu/wellness](http://smt.d.umich.edu/wellness) for warm up and cool down videos.



### **Tips for stretches and exercises:**

- Encourage students to take a few minutes before playing to warm up and a few minutes after playing to cool down
- Dynamic stretching before playing
- Static stretching after playing
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds
- Never push the body farther than what feels comfortable
- Continue to breathe steadily through the exercises
- Deepen the stretch slightly on the exhale

### **Ideas for language to use when addressing posture at the piano:**

“Point your elbows towards the ground.”

“Stand on the tips of your fingers.”

“Show me the bubble in your hand.”

“Make the bug on your wrist jump.”

“Sink into the bench.”

“Plant your feet on the ground.”

“Shine your heart towards the piano.”

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Website video link:

[www.smt.d.umich.edu/wellness](http://www.smt.d.umich.edu/wellness)