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How to Prevent Performance-Related Injuries in Musicians: Annotated Bibliography

How to Prevent Performance-Related Injuries in Musicians

Annotated Bibliography

Abstract: When a musician becomes injured, there are numerous resources to consult to find out how to recover and heal, but there are not many resources available detailing how to not become injured in the first place. Most people encounter injury preventative techniques when they attend university, but by this time, a large percentage of these students already have pain and discomfort from playing their instrument, and they may even already be injured. My thesis, that educating children on injury prevention is the key to breaking the cycle of performance-related injuries in musicians, is explored in the following sources by combining educational philosophies from the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, and Suzuki Method.

Berenson, Gail, and Barbara Lister-Sink. "Essential Skills for Promoting a Lifelong Love of Music and Music Making Developing the Fundamental Skill: Healthful, Injury-Preventive Technique: PART 2 OF 4." *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 5 (2005): 18-23.

In this article, Berenson and Lister-Sink advocate for the importance of injury prevention in music education and emphasize that injury preventative techniques must be taught to beginning students in order for injuries to not occur. The authors wrote a step-by-step guide on how to establish good habits in students, and these steps range from physical techniques to mental awareness. Many of the ideas in this article are related to the Alexander Technique, although the authors rarely mention this connection. This source is foundational to my research topic, for the authors also advocate for early education on body awareness and good mechanical habits.

Crappell, Courtney, and Barbara Lister-Sink. "The ABCs of Gen X, Y(P), Z: A Column for Young Professionals: Playing-Related Injuries: The Dark Side of Our Profession and How You Can Help." *American Music Teacher*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (2015): 16-19.

Although this source is similar to the previous source, Crappell's and Lister-Sink's article is meant to guide private studio teachers through the necessary steps of preventing injury in their piano students. Lister-Sink details her own injury journey and describes her students' struggles with performance-related injuries and recovery. Although many teachers are satisfied by the resources provided to students for injury recovery, she emphasizes that "...we cannot leave health and injury-prevention to accrediting organizations and universities. Independent music teachers need to promote health from the very beginning of study." (p. 17) This source will be used as a supplement to the previous article, for it goes into greater detail on how to teach piano students specifically.

Hallberg, Karin. "Does Music Instruction Using the Suzuki Method Improve Working Memory and Visual-Spatial Processing in Children?" PhD diss., Northern Arizona University, 2014. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

This dissertation explores how the Suzuki Method impacts children's learning habits and abilities and compares a group of children studying the Suzuki Method with a control group. This source will be used in conjunction with my other Suzuki-related sources to examine how children use their memory and reasoning skills in learning musical instruments, and my goal is to apply this information to finding ways of teaching injury prevention to children.

Kind, Ethan. "The Hurting Musician: Why Performers Resist Letting Go of Limitations." *American Music Teacher* 56, no. 6 (2007): 26-27.

This short article is a wonderful introduction to the benefits of the Alexander Technique. The author details his own struggles before discovering the Alexander Technique and displays the benefits of the method by giving both a personal account and providing a glimpse into what is covered in an AT lesson. He discusses the impact that injuries can have on a musician's mental state, and I intend to use this information to explain why musicians have not broken the cycle of performance-related injuries.

Kleinman, Judith, and Peter Buckoke. *The Alexander Technique for Musicians*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

This book is an all-encompassing guide on how to approach the Alexander Technique physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is an excellent source for someone who is interested in getting to know more about the technique, although it does not replace the need for a private instructor. This book explains F. M. Alexander's philosophies in a practical way, and since this book contains many diagrams and photographs displaying the ideas being described, it is one of the most thorough Alexander resources available. This source will aid in describing the philosophies and ideas of the Alexander Technique and will be used to describe multiple techniques of injury prevention. This source does not contain much information on children, however, so I will have to use this source in conjunction with the Suzuki sources to support my thesis.

Kwon, Sae. "Basic Principles of the Alexander Technique Applied to Cello Pedagogy in Three Case Studies." PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 2012. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

This dissertation is a focused study of how incorporating the Alexander Technique in private cello lessons affects students' progress. The results of the study were very positive, and as the

author mentions in the abstract, these results should inspire more private teachers to incorporate AT concepts into their teaching methods. I will use this source as evidence that it is beneficial for students to have private teachers with knowledge of body-awareness concepts.

Lee, Catherine. "Musicians as Movers: Applying the Feldenkrais Method to Music Education." *Music Educators Journal* 104, no. 4 (2018): 15-19.

This source is exactly as its title suggests. It also provides a description of the Feldenkrais Method and argues that methods such as FM, the Alexander Technique, and Body Mapping should be used in conjunction with traditional music education to help students be more comfortable and free in their pursuit of music. This source will aid in describing the Feldenkrais method as well as supporting my thesis that music education and injury prevention should go hand-in-hand.

Madden, Catherine. "The Language of Teaching Coordination: Suzuki Training Meets the Alexander Technique." *Theatre Topics* 12, no. 1 (2002): 49-61.

This source combines the topics of Tadashi Suzuki Method of Actor Training (not to be confused with the Suzuki Method) and the Alexander Technique. It explores how to best present Alexander's ideas of movement to students of their craft through careful language and anatomically correct images. I will use this source to support my belief that students should have access to resources such as anatomically correct images, as well as teachers who can explain how the information in these images can be applied to learning an instrument.

Mattes, Josef. "Attentional Focus in Motor Learning, the Feldenkrais Method, and Mindful Movement." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 123, no. 1 (2016): 258-76.

This article does not focus on the musical aspect of the Feldenkrais Method, but on the sports psychology aspect. This source, along with the Lee article, describes the Feldenkrais Method, but since its focus is in a completely different discipline, it gives different insights into the method. Since musicians are often compared to athletes, my goal is to use this source to compare how athletes and musicians approach this method of body-awareness and movement.

Palac, Judy. "Collaborating for Musical Health and Wellness: It Takes a Village." *American Music Teacher* 64, no. 6 (2015): 28-30.

Palac stresses the importance of larger educational institutions' role in educating students about body awareness and injury prevention. She displays how institutions such as universities can play a role in students' injury awareness and prevention by providing a large network of support such as teachers, Alexander Technique instructors, and medical professionals. This article will be put in conversation with the articles by Lister-Sink, who believes that injury education should begin as early as possible with the private teacher.

Suzuki, Shinichi. *The Suzuki Concept: An Introduction to a Successful Method for Early Music Education*. Edited by Elizabeth Mills and Therese Cecile Murphy. Berkeley: Diablo Press, 1973.

This book goes into great detail in explaining the reasoning behind Suzuki's specific instructions for both playing and teaching the violin. It also advocates that the Suzuki Method can be applied to many areas of education and not just music. It contains visual aids such as photographs, diagrams, and charts to help the reader fully understand Suzuki's groundbreaking educational methods. This source will be used to create a description of the Suzuki Method and to support my belief that this method can be applied to learning body-awareness methods at a young age.

Wijsman, Suzanne and Bronwen J. Ackermann. "Educating Australian Musicians: Are We Playing It Safe?" *Health Promotion International*, Volume 34, Issue 4, (August 2019): 869–876.

This source displays the high rate of injury occurrence in musicians, especially in Australia, and it advocates for education on musician health for students of all ages. It is one of the only sources that specifically mentions high injury occurrence in young musicians, and advocates for the integration of health education into music education. This source will aid in providing statistics of injury occurrence and will be used to support my thesis that educating children on injury prevention is the key to breaking the cycle of performance-related injuries in musicians.