

AGO 2024 San Francisco

2 July 2024, 11:00

Music for a While: Injury Prevention for Organists of All Ages

Questions later? Email katelyn.emerson@gmail.com

Goals

- 1) Overview of risk factors, both general and specific to organists
- 2) How we can mitigate our risk
- 3) Detecting and reacting to discomfort and tension
- 4) Steps to take if something more extreme happens

Risk factors

Personal

Performance-related

Some aspects of our instrument lower our risk

We need to watch out for the risks potentially related to other aspects, such as:

- Poor posture
 - Muscle imbalances
 - Console layout
- Excessive training
- Sudden changes in practice or repertoire

Things we can control to mitigate risk

- Body awareness
 - Hone this in daily life as well as in practice
- Avoid overuse
 - Be aware of practice duration, taking breaks, using thoughtful practice strategies
- Avoid misuse
 - Thoughtfully warm up, avoid awkward postures, detect tension, be aware of use of the body

Detecting discomfort or tension?

- Slow down
- Determine the cause
- Examine from another viewpoint

What to do if something more extreme occurs

- Increase number of breaks
- Focus on more deliberate, mental practice
- Check on 'home' positions/postures (but don't remain static in them)
- Seek professional help
 - General practitioner
 - Physical therapist
 - Occupational therapist

In your playing, some longer-term adjustments can include:

- Technique adjustments that use larger muscles to position and support detailed work of smaller muscles
- Guided strengthening and stretching of supportive muscles
- Lifestyle awareness and adjustments

Further reading/resources

<https://www.bapam.org.uk/>

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