

Health and Safety

The Music Department is concerned with the health and safety of all music students, faculty and staff. It is essential that musicians carry out their daily practice and performance activities carefully.

From the NASM Handbook:

Students enrolled in music unit programs and faculty and staff with employment status in the music unit must be provided basic information about the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of practice, performance, teaching, and listening.

NOTE: *Health and safety depend in large part on the personal decisions of informed individuals. Institutions have health and wellness responsibilities, but fulfillment of these responsibilities cannot and will not ensure any specific individual's health and safety. Too many factors beyond any institution's control are involved. Individuals have a critically important role and each is personally responsible for avoiding risk and preventing injuries to themselves before, during, and after study or employment at any institution.*

The resources on this page are for informational purposes only. They are not a substitute for professional or medical advice. Students should consult with their studio instructors, their ensemble directors and medical professionals for specific concerns.

Hearing Health

The information found here is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA).

http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA_Hearing_Health

Basic Information on Hearing Health and Information Recommendations for Faculty and Staff in Schools of Music can be found at:

http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM_Advisories/2_NASM_PAMA-Faculty_and_Staff_2011Nov.pdf

Basic Information on Hearing Health and Information Recommendations for Student Musicians can be found located on the NASM Web site at the URL links below:

http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM_Advisories/3a_NASM_PAMA-Student_Orientation_Script-Standard.pdf

In addition, earplugs are available for ensemble students as a preventative measure against potential hearing loss.

Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health

NASM has provided the following resources regarding neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health for musicians:

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=NASM-PAMA+Advisories+on+Neuromusculoskeletal+and+Vocal+Health>

Information and Recommendations for Administrators and Faculty in Schools of Music

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM+Advisories/1+NASM+PAMA+NMH-Admin+and+Faculty+June%202014.pdf>

Information and Recommendations for Faculty and Staff in Schools of Music

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM+Advisories/2+NASM+PAMA+NMH-Faculty+and+Staff+June%202014.pdf>

Information and Recommendations for Student Musician

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM+Advisories/3a+NASM+PAMA+NMH-Student+Orientation+Script-Standard+June%202014.pdf>

Protecting Neuromusculoskeletal Health

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM+Advisories/5a+NASM+PAMA+NMH-Student+Information+Sheet-Standard%20NMH+June%202014.pdf>

Protecting Vocal Health

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/PAMA-NASM+Advisories/6a+NASM+PAMA+NMH-Student+Information+Sheet-Standard%20Vocal+June%202014.pdf>

VOCAL HEALTH FOR SINGERS

As singers, we are dependent on the health and function of the entire body. While some health issues, such as allergies, asthma, or gastric reflux must be addressed by a health care professional, there are many habits that we can cultivate to keep our voices healthy.

Maintaining vocal health involves: Rest, Hydration, and Proper Use

REST

Rest your body. We each have differing needs to function at our best. Know your own sleep needs and stick to them; especially the night before a voice lesson or a performance!

1. Maintain a regular sleep schedule; even on the weekends.
2. Avoid computers and cell phones for the last hour before bedtime. The blue light from these screens cues the body to wake up because your body interprets it as daylight!
3. Watch out for hidden sources of caffeine such as chocolate and avoid it before bedtime.

Rest your voice. Again, we each have different needs. Some of us can speak or sing for longer periods of time than others. Are you speaking more than you have to?

1. Avoid speaking during class breaks. Step away from common areas and find a quiet place. Take a “vocal nap”!
2. A warm-up is exactly that; a few minutes spent vocalizing and stretching the instrument. Do NOT sing your whole performance or repeatedly sing high notes in an attempt to reassure yourself that they are there!
3. Speak with the same legato line you strive for when singing.
4. Men: stay out of your falsetto register during and immediately following a cold. Use of falsetto during or immediately after a cold can cause swelling and delay recovery.
5. Parties and crowded places can encourage us to speak loudly and more excitedly. This is to be avoided in general but especially before a voice lesson or performance.

HYDRATION

Most of us are dehydrated most of the time!

1. Aim for 6-8 glasses of water per day.
2. Avoid caffeine and alcohol because they are dehydrating to you and your voice!
3. Humidify your home and your workspace
4. Vocalize in the shower. The steam and humidity are great for the vocal mechanism!
5. Heating systems dry out the throat and nasal cavity. Be prepared for winter!

DID YOU KNOW: When the throat and nasal passages are dry, they are MORE prone to retain

the germs that cause colds and respiratory illness!

Keep hydrated at all times!

Avoid caffeinated drinks and alcohol

OR

Follow a caffeinated or alcoholic beverages with water!

PROPER USE OF THE VOICE - WARMING UP

Topics such as correct posture and body alignment, breathing and tone production will be discussed in detail at your individual lesson. However, prior to rehearsals, practice sessions and performances, it is important for you to properly warm up the voice. Like a stretching routine before a physical workout, a vocal warm-up routine will ease you into singing and reduce the strain on your voice. Warm up exercises specific to your voice will be assigned in your lesson. The following exercises can be used by all voice categories:

EX. #1 – Trills – Use your lips to “buzz” (trill) a sliding scale of an octave

Use your tongue to trill a sliding scale of an octave

EX. #2 – Straw Exercises – Take a drinking straw and close your lips around it. Sing “uh” into the straw, sliding one octave back and forth, low to high.

You can also try this exercise using a cup of water. Fill the glass about half-full and sing “uh” into the straw while it is in the cup of water. Try to keep the stream of air consistent so you constantly are making bubbles. If the water is splashing you in the face, you are directing too much air through the straw (and your vocal folds!).

If the sound stops when you put a finger over the end of the straw, you are directing too much air through your nose.

This is an excellent warm up for both your singing and speaking voice because it actually stretches and thins the vocal folds. The folds function best in this state.

There are numerous YouTube tutorials on the topic of straw exercises if you would like more information.

PROTECT YOUR HEARING. As a musician, you are dependent on your hearing! Consider the use of ear plugs if you will be exposed to prolonged, loud sounds at work, in public places or even in your car. DAMAGED HEARING CAN RARELY BE FIXED.

Like an athlete, your body IS your instrument. Treat it with care and it will serve you for many years to come!

Handling Instruments and Equipment

Only ECC facility staff or other authorized personnel should move heavy equipment or handle any potentially dangerous materials. Music students, faculty and staff are advised to consult with the Director of Grounds and Facility for proper handling of any potentially dangerous materials. Use of recording devices, music technology and electronics must be done with guidance from authorized personnel.

Students working as stage managers or assisting productions must be trained to properly handle and move any equipment including audio/recording equipment, risers, percussion instruments, etc.

Students are expected to clean and maintain their instruments regularly. Special attention to Department of Music instruments that are shared is especially important. As a rule, students should have their own instrument. When this is not possible, students who share a brass or woodwind instrument should have their own mouthpiece. All students who are sharing a reed instrument **must** have their own reeds. The Department of Music will provide alcohol wipes or Sterisol germicide solution for student use when sharing instruments in class.

Suggested sites for instrumental care and maintenance:

http://musicshowcaseonline.com/resources_instrumentCare.asp

<http://redwingmusicrepair.org/band/resources.html>

Psychological Health including Performance Anxiety

Free linkable articles on Music Performance Anxiety, these live within EBSCO and are available to ECC students, staff and faculty

[http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&db=oih&db=hlh&db=psyh&bquery=\(DE+%26quot%3bPERFORMANCE+anxiety%26quot%3b\)+AND+\(DE+%26quot%3bMUSIC+---+Performance%26quot%3b\)&type=1&site=ehost-live](http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&db=oih&db=hlh&db=psyh&bquery=(DE+%26quot%3bPERFORMANCE+anxiety%26quot%3b)+AND+(DE+%26quot%3bMUSIC+---+Performance%26quot%3b)&type=1&site=ehost-live)

For off campus access I need to add the ezproxy to the link. This allows ECC faculty, staff and students to access these articles after entered ID number followed by EC and last name as this link is to EBSCOhost databases.

Please use

[http://ezproxy.eastcentral.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&db=oih&db=hlh&db=psyh&bquery=\(DE+%26quot%3bPERFORMANCE+anxiety%26quot%3b\)+AND+\(DE+%26quot%3bMUSIC+--+Performance%26quot%3b\)&type=1&site=ehost-live](http://ezproxy.eastcentral.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&db=oih&db=hlh&db=psyh&bquery=(DE+%26quot%3bPERFORMANCE+anxiety%26quot%3b)+AND+(DE+%26quot%3bMUSIC+--+Performance%26quot%3b)&type=1&site=ehost-live)

Helpful resources include:

- <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/stage-fright-performance-anxiety>
- <http://www.bulletproofmusician.com/>
- <http://www.musiciansway.com/performance.shtml>

General Musicians' Health Websites:

American Federation of Musicians (AFM)

<http://www.afm.org/resources.health-and-therapy>

The Performing Arts medical Association (PAMA)

www.artsmed.org