

String Players As Athletes: Training for a Lifetime  
2017 CMEA Conference  
Jessica Chen and Codi Ng, University of Colorado Boulder  
[jessica.chen@colorado.edu](mailto:jessica.chen@colorado.edu)    [codi.ng@colorado.edu](mailto:codi.ng@colorado.edu)

### **The Six Pillars of Musician's Wellness**

#### **Sleep**

- Brain Benefits → improved mood, increased levels of alertness, increased memory formation
- Body Benefits → muscle repair, maintenance and growth of bones and muscles
- Hormone secretion and regulation

#### **Nutrition**

- Balanced diet of proteins, carbohydrates and fats + protein and amino acids aid in muscle development and repair
- Incorporate anti-inflammatory foods and supplements, and medicine
- Hydration is key!

#### **Fitness and Exercise**

- Counterbalance the stress and repetitive nature of playing an instrument
- Maintain core strength and overall cardiovascular endurance
- Yoga and pilates can aid in breath control, core strength, and overall flexibility
- Swimming provides a low impact, whole body work-out

#### **Mental Wellness**

- Recognize anxiety and anxiety sensitivity
- Implement practice strategies that encourage journaling, prioritizing, and time management
- Practice performing
- Meditation and mindful breathing exercises

#### **Movement Therapy**

- Focus on tension relief through stretching and massage, as well as achieving alignment and movement free of excessive tension
- Suggested practices → ice and heat therapy, chiropractic, nerve glides, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, massage and foam rolling

#### **Performance Practice**

- Practice=training, both for maintenance and building; incorporate appropriate warm-up and cool down exercises and breaks
- Physiology-oriented music pedagogues: Paul Rolland, Karen Tuttle, Dalcroze
- Self observation and reflection with mirror, videotape, AT observation/inhibition process
- Choose attire conducive to moving, playing, breathing, standing

### **Recommended Materials**

- Develop movement-oriented and anatomically accurate language and vocabulary
- Practice journal/log
- Mirror, video recorder
- Foam rollers/massage tools
- Packets of stretches and nerve glides
- Established wellness-oriented practice space
- Proper set-up and accessories for your instrument in different settings
  - Chairs and stands
  - Neck straps
  - Shoulder rests/chin rests

### **Resources**

#### **Sleep, Nutrition & Fitness:**

American Sleep Association: <https://www.sleepassociation.org/>

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: <http://www.eatright.org/>

Musician's Health: <http://www.musicianshealth.com/>

The Breathing Gym by Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan (Choral and Wind Instruments)

#### **Mental Wellness:**

The Inner Game of Music by Barry Green and W. Timothy Gallwey

The Inner Game of Tennis by W. Timothy Gallwey

The Bulletproof Musician: <http://www.bulletproofmusician.com/>

#### **Injury Prevention and Movement Therapy:**

Playing Less Hurt by Janet Horvath

The Alexander Technique: <http://www.alexandertechnique.com/>

Andover Educators and Body-Mapping: <http://bodymap.org/main/>

What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body by Barbara and William Conable

What Every Violinist Needs to Know About the Body by Jennifer Johnson

Feldenkrais: <http://www.feldenkrais.com/vhatis>

#### **Practice Strategies and Routines:**

Practicing for Artistic Success: The Musician's Guide to Self-Empowerment by Burton Kaplan

The Musician's Practice Log by Burton Kaplan

The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness by Gerald Klickstein

#### **Pedagogy:**

Coordinated Effort: A Study of Karen Tuttle's Influence on Modern Viola Teaching by Matthew Dane

A Comparative Study of the Violin Playing Techniques Developed by Kato Havas, Paul Rolland, and Shinichi Suzuki by Marianne Murray Perkins

The Teaching of Action in String Playing: Violin and Viola by Paul Rolland