

WHY SHOULD IT HURT TO PLAY?

by Janet Horvath

We who play instruments know that there are few experiences in life as fulfilling as making music. It is the ultimate synthesis of thought, emotion, physical action and technique. When performing for an audience we have a positive influence not only on others, but also on ourselves.

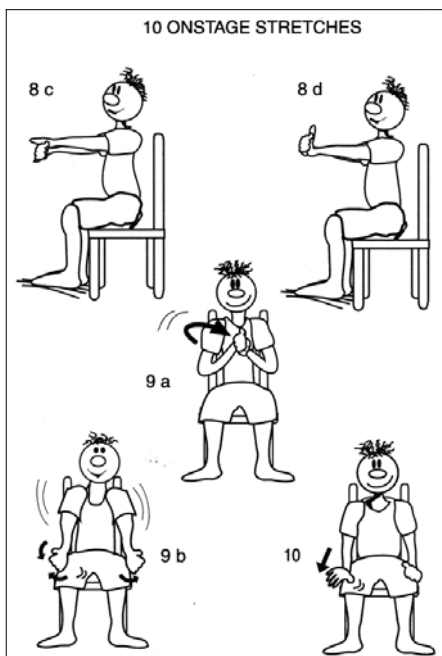
We who teach know that mastering an instrument takes long hours of solitary practice, organization, discipline, intense concentration, motivation and tenacity. The challenges range from the vicissitudes

that the years of demanding repertoire and awkward postures, when combined with the hectic pace of rehearsals, festivals and performances often results in the very real risk of physical pain and injury.

My phone rings off the hook with calls from distraught performers, teachers, students and even their doctors seeking advice and information. *Playing (less) Hurt—An Injury Prevention Guide for Musicians* is intended as a readable and comprehensive guide and reference for all concerned with pain in musical work: professional and amateur musicians, teachers and students, doctors and therapists. Many of the subjects discussed are pertinent to all musicians on any instrument.

In this book, I explain why injuries occur, who is at greatest risk and why, as well as how to achieve technical ease and pacing. I explain what to guard against in order to avoid injury, and how to rehabilitate yourself should injury strike. The elimination of pain is not simply an end in itself. True ease of expression allows you and your instrument to resonate freely, and when you achieve a state of physical serenity, your audience can feel it.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first part provides an overview of how injuries can arise in the course of a musical life, in school and on the job. The second part goes into considerable medical depth to explain various injuries common



Some of the practical advice in *Playing (less) Hurt*.

of everyday life to a musician's unique circumstances: a highly competitive environment, the isolation and loneliness of solitary practice, the stresses of extensive travel, performance anxiety, the prohibitive cost of professional-quality instruments and the problems of mastering techniques.

Only in recent years, though, have we begun to acknowledge perhaps the biggest challenge of all: the very real obstacle of physical pain. How can we express ourselves and recreate the great masterworks that we love with ease and expressivity, and yet avoid injury in the process?

All of us are susceptible. Too often we suffer pain and dysfunction, sometimes needlessly, and at odds with the extraordinary skill and talent we exemplify. As a professional who's been there, I can tell you



This newly published book is essential for all musicians. String, keyboard, percussion, harp, brass, and wind players will play and feel better.

It is available for credit card orders at www.playinglesshurt.com, by fax to (651) 222-7420, or purchase locally at Orchestra Hall box office, Claire Givens Violins, Groth Music, and Bound to Be Read bookstore, 870 Grand Ave., St. Paul. (\$21.00 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling. MN residents add 7% sales tax; 2' x 3' poster \$10.95; 6 card stock 8-1/2" x 11" posters \$16.00; ea. additional item add \$2.00 shipping.)

Table of Contents

I "No pain, no gain"	forearm pain
II The prevalence of injuries among instrumental musicians	X Other conditions
III A definition of overuse	XI Guidelines for parents and teachers
IV Risk factors for orchestral musicians	XII Stretching and strengthening
V Causes of overuse injuries	XIII Chair problems
VI Risk factors and understanding danger signals	XIV Outdoor concerts and other hazards
VII Static loading, back and disc problems	XV Musicians' hearing loss
VIII Muscle and tendon disorders of the arms and shoulders	XVI What to do when you're hurt
IX Nerve entrapments, and hand and	XVII Rehabilitation and work-hardening
	XVIII Instrument modifications
	XIX A guide to sensible practicing
	XX Views for the future

to instrumental musicians. The last third of the book offers a wide-ranging compendium of preventative and restorative approaches, all presented with humor. Several musicians' personal stories, caricatures and photos are woven throughout to make this book fun to read for young performers as well. At the end of the book, you will find an extensive resource list that includes books, videos, articles and websites, as well

as performing arts medical facilities, associations and products.

Janet Horvath, associate principal cello of the Minnesota Orchestra for over two decades, is a soloist, chamber musician, writer and advocate for injury prevention. A trail-blazer in speaking and writing openly about the physical stresses experienced by musicians, she has contributed importantly

to improvements in working conditions and in awareness for musicians' work-related ailments and their prevention. She has conducted seminars called "Playing (less) Hurt" all over the nation. The Injury Prevention Guide for Musicians is the culmination of 20 years of lecturing and teaching in the field of Performing Arts Medicine. ♪