


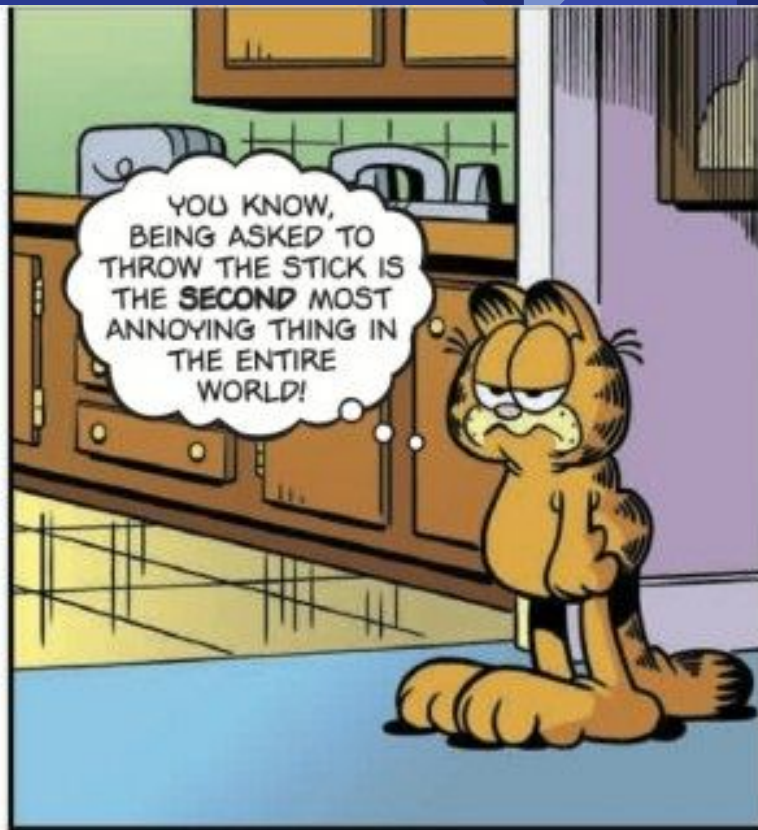
Wellness for Accordionists

Presented by Rachel Quirbach, MTI
AAA Festival 2018 | Alexandria, Virginia
12 July 2018

The Blurb

Being an accordionist can take a significant physical and mental toll on your body and brain if not approached with wellness in mind. Musicians around the world are starting to learn about different practices - like yoga - that allow musicians to play for their entire lifetime. In this workshop, learn **physical self-care techniques** that you can use to get the most out of your playing without getting injured as well as **mindfulness techniques** you can use to keep a positive relationship between you and your accordion. Come ready to release some tension and have a great time!





wellness

'welnəs/

noun

the quality or state of being healthy
in **body** and **mind**, especially as the
result of **deliberate effort**



84%

Prevalence Rate of Lifetime **Injury** for Musicians

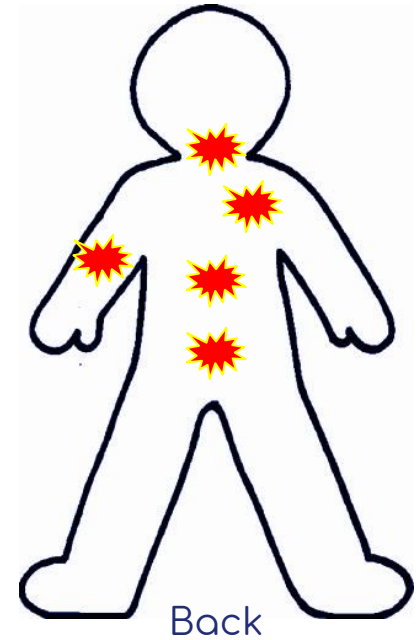
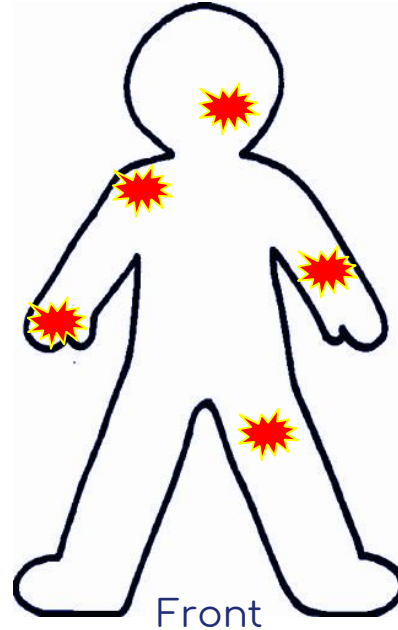
Why Musicians?

1. Tension
2. Overuse
3. Insufficient Warm-up
4. Repetitive Motion Injuries



What happens?

- Pain
 - Hand / Wrist - 41%
 - Neck - 38%
 - Shoulder - 35%
 - Lumbar Spine (Lower Back) - 26%
 - Forearm - 11%
 - Elbow Area - 10%
 - Thoracic Spine (Upper Back) - 8%
 - Scapular Area - 7%
 - TMJ (Jaw) - 1%
- Loss of range of motion
- Loss of endurance
- Loss of fine motor control
- Anxiety
- Loss of connection with music performance as a primary expressive outlet

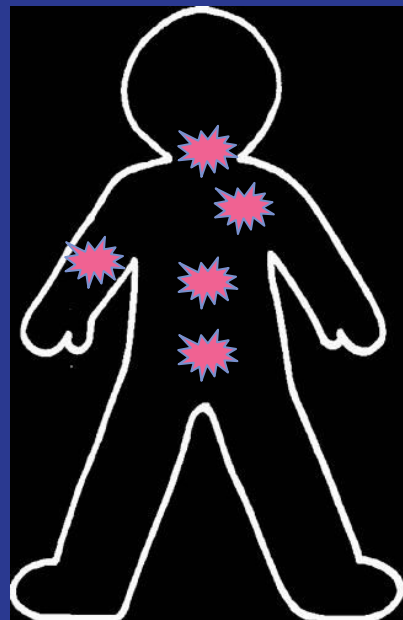
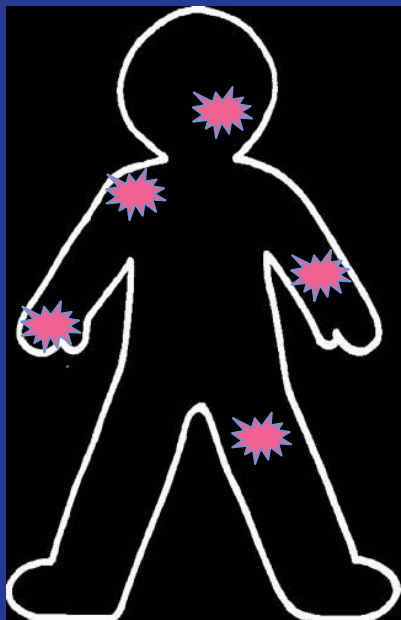


Oh. What if the keyboard were smaller & hung around your neck on a strap & had a pleated windbag on the end that sounded like a wounded goose when you squeezed it?

PODAN
PROB.
11-9-17




BEETHOVEN & SOME DUDE
IMAGINING AN ACCORDION



Keeping Your Mind Well

- Remember - playing is a full-body experience
 - Your mental and physical wellness are equally important
- Set goals for what you want to accomplish in a session
 - Make them realistic
 - Keep an ongoing progress log
- Prioritize practice efficiency over practice time
 - Longer practice hours do not make you a better musician
 - Practice small chunks of music at a time
 - Utilize run-throughs of pieces as mental rewards and closure at the end of practice sessions
- Listen to music
 - Both music you enjoy AND music you've never heard before
 - The song you want to play done by non-accordionists
 - Expands your overall musicianship

Keeping Your Mind Well cont.

- Play with other musicians!
 - Friends, family, community music ensembles, etc.
 - Play along with online recordings and/or backing tracks
 - Think of why you play the accordion in the first place
 - If you're not enjoying it, what are the reasons why?
 - Physical pain, stress, mental fatigue, boredom, etc.
 - When you get sick of playing the accordion:
 - Take a (time limited) break
 - Play what you enjoy playing
 - Find a way to play / cover a song you enjoy but maybe don't have music for
 - Goof around
 - Explore the random noises your instrument can make
 - Find a way to make it fun / a game
 - Look back at your progress and the goals you have met
- 



Example: A *Healthy* Approach to *Hanon* Exercises

Hanon 1



Hanon 2



Keeping Your Body Well

- Use proper posture
 - How you wear your accordion impacts your body
 - Improper posture leads to tension and pain
 - Factors to consider:
 - Straps too tight or too loose
 - Neck position when looking at keys on the right hand
 - Left hand strap
 - Too tight will cut off circulation
 - Too loose will make it harder to control bellows
 - Chair position
 - There is no one universal right way
 - Holding the instrument should not be causing you pain
- Breathe into your playing
 - Think of yourself as a wind instrumentalist




Keeping Your Body Well

- Make sure to have a proper warm-up
 - Wake up your body and get your blood flowing at the beginning of each practice session, rehearsal, performance, etc.
 - You do not need the accordion on in order to warm up
- Be mindful of areas of tension
 - If something hurts, stop immediately!
 - Know how to relieve areas of tension for parts of your body that regularly cause you pain
- Fuel your body
 - Make sure to eat well and hydrate
 - Should drink half your body weight in ounces every day
 - Ex. 150 lbs => 75 oz water per day
- Move and stretch!
 - Incorporate movement into your routine
 - Learn a sequence that works for you



It's time to **MOVE!!!**

The Sequence in Words

- 3 starfish breaths
 - Shake out wrists
 - Finger flicks
 - Forearm stretches
 - Manicure
 - Reverse manicure
 - Volleyball
 - Arms across body
 - 3 starfish breaths
 - Arm over head lat stretch
 - Arm above head, grab wrist stretch
 - Partner shoulder/back stretch
 - Twists / loosen up
 - 3 starfish breaths
 - *Sit cross legged on floor*
 - Head tilt neck stretch
 - Head to armpit neck stretch
 - Neck rolls
 - Seated spine twists
 - Roll head down for deep upper back stretch
 - Child's pose
- 



Questions/Comments

Thank You!

Want to learn more? Contact me!

- > In person at Festival
- > Email - rachelquirbachy@gmail.com
- > Facebook - Rachel Quirbach
- > Instagram - [@rachel.quirbach](https://www.instagram.com/rachel.quirbach)