

10 Ergonomic Tips for Musicians

1. **Maintain a healthy body weight** I saw musicians in the same class as athletes over and over again. Between the practicing, the performing, the traveling to and from performances and transporting heavy instruments and equipment around, musicians get a workout. Think of all that bowing they do, all those encores to play! Being in the best possible shape you can be to start with is ideal.
2. **Evaluate your instrument.** This includes not only finding out if the instrument itself is right for you and the right size for your body but finding out about how to play, adjust and transport it properly. Keep it in good condition so you're not struggling to make a poorly maintained instrument sound good and work well.
3. **Evaluate Your Technique** Who knows if the way you were taught or the way you're playing is apt to be the cause or a contributing factor of your pain? Maybe something such as a repetitive strain injury?
4. **Always Warm Up.** Not warming up, *playing cold*, can cause or exacerbate an injury.
5. **Observe proper posture.** This will allow you to relax and breathe properly. Maybe you sit at a piano or stand playing an instrument. Sitting and standing postures are different. If you have learned to play in one position you may not be able to play in the other. Both postures need to be exercised in order to strengthen the necessary muscles.
6. **Take several breaks.** Stretch. Don't forget your neck, hands, fingers & wrists.
7. **Strengthen the arms, wrists and hands** Care should be taken as I've read that building up muscle strength with special devices is quite controversial. It's best to consult someone professional before diagnosing and treating yourself or trying to let the Internet diagnose you. Using a contraption that's not right for you and your condition could make matters worse. Seeking advice from a professional about your particular situation is the best idea.
8. **Breathe.** If you're nervous or tense you may realize that you're holding your breath. Relax and breathe in and out. Your body and your audience will thank you.
9. **Pay attention to your body.** *Playing through the pain* may well get you even more pain to try and play through until you can't stand it anymore.
10. **Get help from a professional if you need it**

Source: <http://www.squidoo.com/ErgoMusician>