

Health and Safety in Music at Five Towns College

Five Towns College puts the highest priority on the physical and emotional health of our student body, our faculty and our staff. In accordance with the National Association of Schools of Music, we seek to inform students, faculty and staff of all potential hazards, health or safety issues that might arise due to activities relevant to the study of music. The information provided below seeks to inform all students, faculty and staff of reasonable guidelines to insure avoidance of injury and illness related to all educational activities at the college.

We seek to raise awareness for our students, faculty and staff as to the connections between any intensive studies and/or work at the college and conditions that could arise from those activities. This includes any possible issues involving listening, participation, or attendance at performances, independent personal or ensemble practice, all manners of teaching, and general involvement in music and the related areas of specialty and study. This includes but is not limited to information regarding hearing, vocal and physical health, injury prevention, and the proper operation and handling of any campus materials, equipment or technology.

The following information is defined to inform all participating parties of risks involved in the performance and practice of music. The policies stated do not in any way replace personal responsibility in the assumption of risks or shift blame for personal injuries, poor judgment, or reckless behavior to Five Towns College. Five Towns College seeks to indemnify itself from assumption of responsibility for any individual risks as stated below that are beyond the control of the college.

- All intensive activity in any field incurs a level of risk. Musicians, both instrumental and vocal have the potential to suffer injury related to that activity. Such injuries could include but are not limited to repetitive motion injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, laryngitis or vocal nodes. Lack of proper judgement such as inattention to overuse, force, poor technique, fatigue and general illness or poor health can contribute greatly to pain and disability and in the worst cases cause permanent damage to the performer.
- All sources of authority on the health and wellness of performers recommend a reasonable life style and efforts to remain in good condition. Maintain good general health through proper rest, exercise, diet and hydration. Avoid smoking, drinking and drug use that may impair both physical abilities and judgement. Pay special attention to technical elements and pacing to avoid over work and taxing the student /performer beyond their current abilities. Schedule ample time for breaks

and reflection on the activities performed. Most importantly, do not ignore symptoms of distress or fatigue, and avoid practice or performance when the body is clearly taxed beyond what is a reasonable amount of physical or emotional stress. Know your own limitations, and seek to improve and grow by gentle challenges; - do not attempt to perform or practice beyond your current abilities.

- Evaluate how life activities could contribute to physical fatigue that will limit your practice and performance abilities. Over use of cell phones and computers, extensive driving, shouting, exposure to artificial environments or allergens could compound challenges with health and injury. When symptoms persist beyond a reasonable amount of time, seek professional assistance, possibly including the assistance of a medical professional.
- Creative individuals tend to be more sensitive to mental wellness issues and serious musicians are no strangers to mental and physical stress. Be aware that these higher levels of stress and anxiety can contribute to a greater risk of depression and other mental illnesses. Any concerns or issues should be brought to the attention of a medical professional as well as the college counselor. All college officials and employees are available to direct those needing assistance with such issues.
- Actively work to avoid hearing loss. Professional musicians are at particular risk for hearing loss in practice, performance and the activities involved in daily life. Take the risk of permanent hearing loss seriously, and limit the exposure to excessively loud, excessively long noises exceeding 85 dB. Use earplugs when necessary and avoid situations where amplified music or sound is excessive. Take care to adjust levels on personal devices in addition to care taken in practice, ensembles and amplified performance. Five Towns College noise samples from a variety of ensembles, classrooms, spaces and events have been consistently monitored within the safe limit of 80dB.
- Use care when operating and moving equipment. Risk of lifting injury and burns are a concern when working with Audio or Theater equipment in our environment. Reasonable caution and insuring a proper knowledge of the safe use of any item is essential in avoiding injury and damage. Always use safe lifting and carrying techniques when moving any equipment, and err on the side of caution. If you think an item is too heavy, wait for assistance. Five Towns College takes the health and safety of all members of our community very seriously and trusts that all students, faculty and staff understand their own personal responsibility in choices relating to their own health. Participation in any activities on campus or related to the school in

any way, assumes that all individuals will act reasonably and rationally in the preservation of the well-being of all involved in any stated activities. As Five Towns College has no control of factors involved in personal judgment, it can thereby not be responsible for safety issues beyond the control of the college. Any concerns about wellness or environmental issues are welcome and should be brought to the attention of the department chair or any college official for remediation.

Additionally, faculty and staff are referred to these documents: (1) Basic Information on Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health: Information and Recommendations for Faculty and Staff in Schools of Music – NASM/PAMA; and (2) Basic Information on Hearing Health: Information and Recommendations for Faculty and Staff in Schools of Music – NASM/PAMA: November 2011.