

**A  
Musician's  
Guide to  
Health and  
Safety**



**New Mexico State University**

Spring 2024

with

Dr. Allan Kaplan

Dr. Laura Spitzer

Sarah Neely, MM

# Musicians' Wellness

1. Advice from David Schulman, clarinetist and physical therapist. “Injury Prevention for Musicians” presentations:

Peabody Conservatory

West Point

Towson University

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Academy

Shepherd School of Music, Rice University, Houston

Loyola University, Baltimore

Temple University, Philadelphia

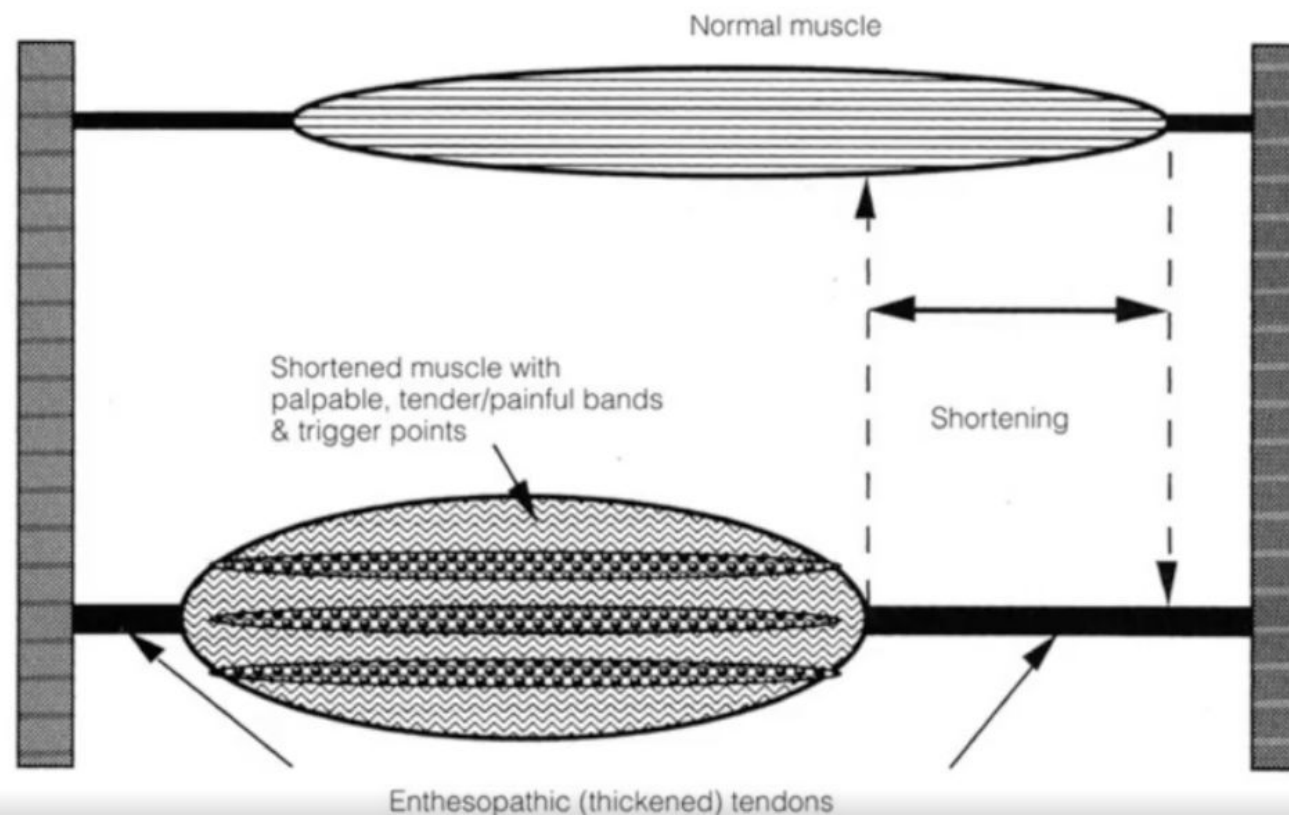
2. Practice strategies to rest muscles while improving technique and musicianship

Slides 2-5 from a video presentation by David Schulman: *Injury Prevention and Care for Musicians*

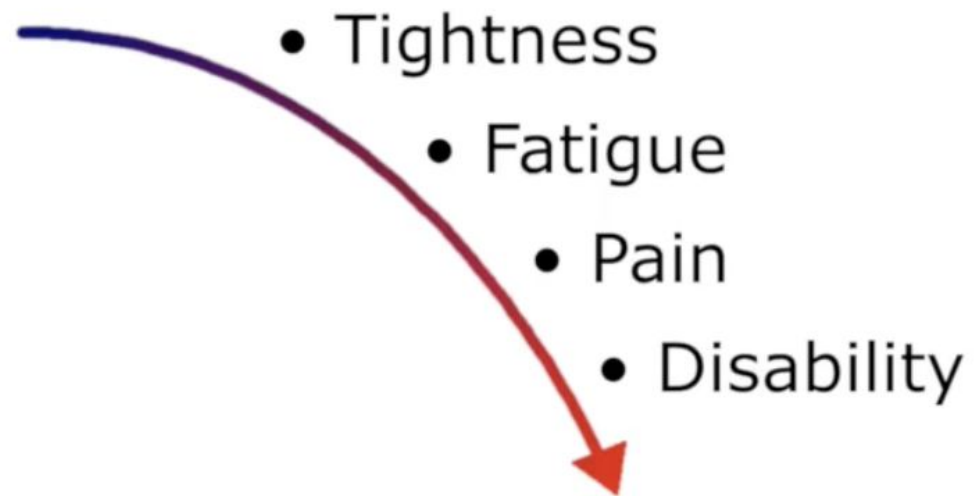
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=965189590184201>

Muscles are happy when warm and elongated and tendons are relaxed. An overused muscle is tight and contracted, sitting on its own blood and nerve supply, getting cold, and creating tension and pain. It pulls on the tendon, making it inflamed and irritated. We want to try not to shorten the muscle.

## Tight and Loose Muscles



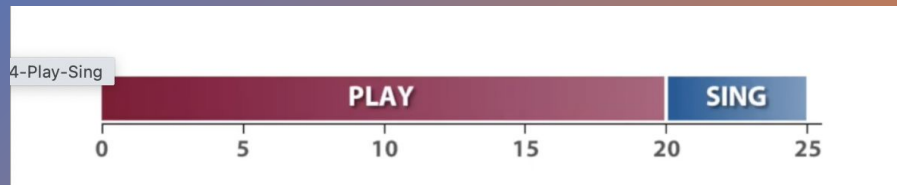
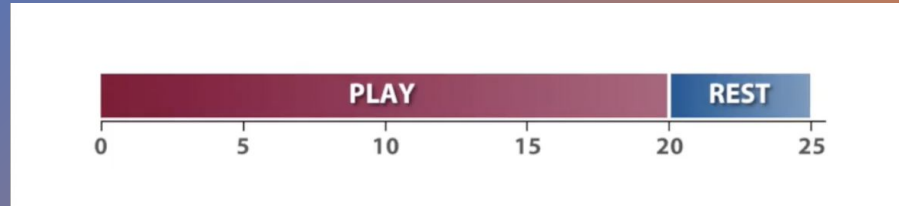
# The Slippery Slope of Overuse

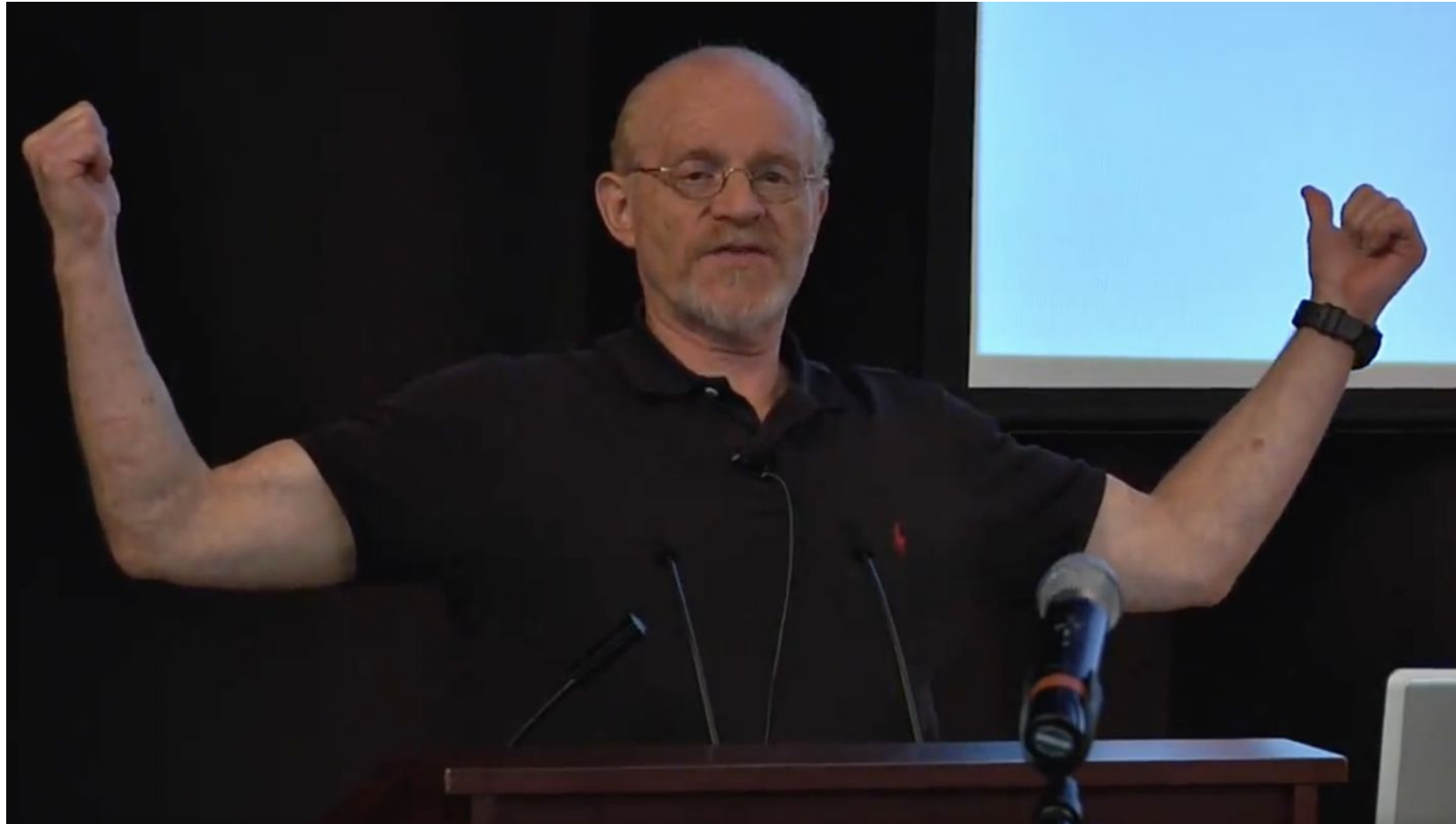


Each of these steps is a red flag, but we often don't notice it, or dismiss it.

# Practicing with Breaks

- No phone or computer
- Stretch
- Use a heating pad
- Remember, happy muscles are warm and elongated
- Sing: MRI studies at Johns Hopkins: the brain lit up just the same, whether subject was playing or singing.





Easy posture/alignment exercise

# Practice strategies to rest muscles while improving technique and musicianship

IPE (Imagine, Play, Evaluate)

Mental Practice

Record, then listen and give yourself a lesson

Study score away from your instrument. Look for 5 things you never noticed

Play softly, tap, blow air with no sound

Consciously relax at rests

# Mental Practice Research Study

from  
<https://bulletproofmusician.com/does-mental-practice-work/>



- + • *In one study, participants who mentally practiced a 5-finger sequence on an imaginary piano for two hours a day had the same neurological changes (and reduction in mistakes) as the participants who physically practiced the same passage on an actual piano. Some have suggested that mental practice activates the same brain regions as physical practice, and may even lead to the same changes in neural structure and synaptic connectivity. –Noa Kageyama*
-



# Mental practice

**Inner hearing** (audialization)

**Inner seeing** (visualization): see the score or the instrument

**Inner touching** (tactilization?!): Feel the touch of your fingers or lips on the instrument, the internal sensations (diaphragm contracting, etc.)

**Inner position and moving** (kinesthetic sense): Feel the distance and speed of your fingers or arms moving from position to position or bowing, and feel the movement of the instrument in your hands. Singers—feel posture and body movement.

# Handout

Your Healthy Practice and Habits handout has more ideas.

Read it during your 5-minute breaks.

Try out one new one each day.

