



SAFE TRAD .COM

PLAY TRAD

PLAY WELL

BE WELL

SAFE TRAD

Supporting traditional musicians to play at their personal best, and to mind themselves.



PLAY WELL

You're doing a great job. Don't get bogged down in myths about what is right or wrong when it comes to posture and instrument supports. Go with what is comfortable for you and what helps you reach your personal optimal sound.



PLAY SMART

Listen to your body. Vary your playing position; alternate sitting and standing. Stretch your whole body and take regular breaks.



MOVE

Humans are designed to move. Every time you play, make a point of doing something afterwards to counteract your playing position e.g. take a walk, go for a run or a cycle, practice yoga; get your heart rate up.

PREVENT INJURY

People are designed to move.

People are designed to move. However, we know that, in order to play and to play well, we need to spend prolonged periods in relatively static positions, at practice. The best playing position is that in which you are most comfortable and that which allows you to play at your personal best. Some trade-off will be needed, so make sure to allocate time after playing to counter-balance your playing position.



FIND THE BALANCE

The time spent playing your instrument is NOT the problem. What you do need to consider is **doing something different** to balance this out when you are **not playing**. Get out of your playing position and do the exact opposite (so stand up and move if you were sitting, stretch out your whole body if you were bent over your instrument). Exercise.

SAFE TRAD IN PLAY

01

Whether during practice, in a workshop, or class, or at a session, consider the following (as appropriate):

- ⦿ Take regular breaks (why not set your phone/clock for reminders, say every 30 minutes)
- ⦿ Set your instrument down between tunes
- ⦿ Do short bursts of exercise (e.g. shoulder rolls, arm stretches, star jumps)
- ⦿ Stop for a few minutes and walk (e.g. around the room, to the bathroom)
- ⦿ Play in/warm up by starting off with some slower/easier tunes
- ⦿ Alternate sitting and standing

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AFTER PLAY



To counteract your playing position and to keep yourself injury-free, YOU SHOULD MOVE.

Any form of aerobic exercise is worthwhile (150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week is recommended*). Have you tried strength training to increase muscle capacity?

OTHER LIFESTYLE GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER

- ④ Getting adequate sleep
- ④ Managing stress (including performance anxiety)
- ④ Looking after your mental health
- ④ Developing good nutrition habits

HOW THE BODY WORKS

The body is made up of a complex network of structures such as muscles and joints which all work together. If one set of muscles is over-stressed, this will have an effect on other muscles and joints. Of course, in playing any musical instrument, we are immediately asking the body to work repeatedly in ways for which it was not specifically designed. This is why we need to pay attention to what our bodies are telling us when they signal (through aches and pains) that we are causing it undue stress.

WARNING SIGNS

- ⦿ Are you experiencing aches and pains?
- ⦿ Have you suffered muscle injury?

See SAFETRAD.COM for further information on dealing with injury.

ALREADY INJURED?

04

SHORT TERM MANAGEMENT

Have you tried an ice pack over the affected area? Massage? Stretching exercises? Remember to take regular **breaks** when playing; **set that clock to remind yourself!**

STRETCHING

There is no hard and fast rule for stretching. However, when you stretch, go as far as is comfortable. Do not push farther. DO NOT cause pain. When you reach the natural end of the muscle and it is on a full stretch, you can hold this position for 10-15 seconds. Relax, and repeat the stretch and hold (about 5 times).

LONG TERM MANAGEMENT

Developing self-awareness is a crucial first step in listening to how your body works.

Trained individuals such as Alexander technique, Yoga and Pilates experts, physiotherapists and massage therapists can help address muscle issues (pain, shortening, weakness, trigger points etc.) and alignment issues (e.g. posture correction). Doctors and pharmacists can also play a role. They do this in different ways, and some may suit you better than others. If the health professional has an understanding of the lifestyle and pressures associated with being a traditional musician, they are likely to be particularly helpful.

PRACTICE SAFE TRAD

“GOOD HABITS ARE
WORTH BEING
FANATICAL ABOUT.”

John Irving

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PLAY WELL

Go with what is comfortable for you when it comes to posture and position; remember, your BEST posture is your NEXT posture.

PLAY SMART

Listen to your body.
STOP. Take breaks often.

MOVE

Get your heart rate up.
After playing ... move!

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