

Dr Penny Wright

Penny explained that asking “have you ever had...?” question to players usually results in around one-third to three-quarter of players revealing that they have suffered a health problem as a direct result of their career.

- Areas of concern (most common first):
 - Neck/back (musculoskeletal)
 - Shoulder/arms
 - Hands
 - Hearing
 - “Nerves”
 - Dental/breathing (singers are prone to these and also have a fear of injuries on stage)
- To avoid musculoskeletal problems, players must maintain a general level of physical fitness including good posture and management of physical workload
- Importance of good posture:
 - Sitting ‘fixes’ the pelvis (bad!) and makes it hard to adjust alignment
 - Chairs should ideally be flexible e.g. Amadeus chairs
 - Using blocks or wedges can be helpful
 - It can be useful to incorporate some sort of physical warm-up before rehearsals and performances
- Water, hydration and meals should be taken into account, especially on tour
- Hearing/noise levels:
 - Players are more at risk from their own instrument
 - Players are more at risk if there is a history of deafness in family (~10% of population)
 - Orchestras should make hearing tests available to players
- Eyesight:
 - Music/stand vs. the conductor
 - Lighting
 - Special glasses often needed
- Students are already vulnerable – they already get injured frequently and are most at risk when still growing