

## **Mobilizing Music Students to Reduce Hand Injuries**

The thought of hand injuries strike fear in pianists' lives. It doesn't have to be. Through proper instruction these fears and the number of injuries can be greatly reduced. Creating awareness among college students regarding the dangers that exist in repetitive practice, bad technique, and the pressure of perfection, is the first step towards a healthier career for musicians. Today, *musician's health* awareness has been fostered through various professional forums: conferences, presentations, hands wellness institutes, and a NASM requirement that mandates higher education institutions incorporate wellness topics into their curriculum. While these platforms exist to advocate and educate, far too often the intended audience is older students who have already encountered a problem.

As a college professor I witness, "hand problems" among my freshman class repeatedly. Usually the root of their problem is they all had poor or incorrect training in their first years of piano studies. It is not usual for all of my entering students to have experienced some form of discomfort, fatigue, pain or in rare cases serious injuries.

In this presentation I would like to highlight common technical problems found among freshman piano students. I will suggest practical solutions that generate immediate help with technique and propose a long term plan for dealing with the root of this issue; poor piano teaching in early stages. By emphasizing the quality in early piano education and preparing our college students, they will take a leading role in changing the way our society thinks thus reducing pianistic injuries.