

CONNECTING THE FIRST YEARS OF PIANO TEACHING WITH HAND INJURY PREVENTION

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To access this presentation visit: www.MargaritaDenenburg.com

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INJURIES ARE REAL

PAIN IS NOT “COOL”

STUDIES

2009

BRANDFONBRENER

226 OF 330

22 OF 26

2017

STANEK, KOMES AND MURDOCK

664 OF 1007

104 OF 159

Studies have shown that between 86% and 89% of music academy students suffer from musculoskeletal complaints in a 12 month period

The age groups with the highest level of musculoskeletal complaints are

50-61 years old

and

22-29 years old

93%

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS



Practice routine- hours increase

Environment

Grading

Competitions

WHY IN COLLEGE?

Scholarship

Lack of flexibility in college requirements

Commitment and motivation

Recitals

“For many students it is when they get to conservatory that practice first takes on the commitment and drive that accompanies a preprofessional environment. It is both the amount and the intensity of practicing that appears related to the development of many if not most music-related medical problems.”

Alice Brandfonbrener, “Epidemiology and Risk Factors,” in *Medical Problems of The instrumentalist Musicians* , (Malden, MA: Blackwell Science Inc., 2000), 171-194.

High school

Monday

7:25a.m.-2:30p.m classes

2:45-5:00 p.m. marching band practice

6:00-7:30 p.m. golf open range practice

Average of 5.15 hours of free time
between 7a.m.-11p.m.

Heidelberg University

Monday/Wednesday

9:00-9:50a.m. class

1-1:50p.m. class

3-3:50p.m. class

Tuesday/Thursday

8:30-9:20a.m class

2-2:50p.m. class

3:30-5:00p.m. class

Average of 13.1 hours of free time
between 7a.m.-11p.m.

Arizona State University

Monday:

10:45a.m.-11:35a.m. class

4:35p.m.-5:50p.m. class

Tuesday:

No classes

Wednesday:

9:00a.m.-10:00a.m. class

10:45a.m.-11:35a.m. class

3:05p.m.-3:55p.m. class

4:35p.m.-5:50p.m. class

Indiana University South Bend

Monday/Wednesday

9:00a.m.-9:50a.m. class

10:00a.m.-11:15a.m.

11:30p.m.-11:45a.m. class

1:00p.m.-2:15p.m.. class

Tuesday/Thursday

10:00a.m.-11:15a.m class

11:30a.m.-12:45p.m. class

1p.m.-2:15p.m. class

4:00p.m.-5:15p.m. class

Average of 14 hours of free time
between 7a.m.-11p.m.

Average of 11.7 hours of free time
between 7a.m.-11p.m.

NASM

“in an effort to promote good musician health at an **early stage**, the National Association of Schools of Music adopted health and safety standards in 2011...”

NASM & PAMA

time to act...

NASM emphasizes
the importance of injury prevention
at the early stages

Freshman year in college?

Summer before college?

Sophomore year in college?

HOW EARLY IS EARLY?

As early as the student decides to make it their profession?

Middle School?

High School?

WE CAN HELP!

HOW AND WHAT WE TEACH

ENDLESS VARIANTS TO
CHOOSE FROM

WHERE DID THE “METHOD BOOKS” IDEA COME FROM?

- **1853** *Modern School for Piano-Forte* by Nathan Richardson
 - **1859** *New Method for the Piano-Forte* by Nathan Richardson.
 - **1861** *Perfect Guide for the Piano in Which the Instructions Are So Clearly and Simply Treated, as to Make It Unnecessary to Require a Teacher* by Septimus Winner
 - **1892-1893** *Standard Graded Course of Studies* by W.S.B. Mathews
-

METHOD BOOKS CAN NOT SUBSTITUTE THE
TEACHER

TEACHERS CAN ADAPT MOST METHOD BOOKS

KNOWLEDGE OF **HOW** TO TEACH BEGINNER
STUDENT IS CRUCIAL

METHODOLOGICAL ADAPTIONS THAT SUPPORT HANDS WELLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION



NON- LEGATO FIRST

- Reasoning :
 - Arm weight
 - Balance
 - Ear
 - Tension freedom
- Method books:
 - Majority begin with legato
 - Complex skill
 - Motor skills – control
 - Tension
- Adaptation:
 - Eliminate the slurs in method book
 - Supplement
 - Eliminate a book during the first lessons



BEGIN WITH 3RD FINGER

- Reasoning:
 - Balance
 - Sound control
 - Arm weight
 - Alignment
 - Method Books:
 - Begin with the thumb
 - Collapsed hand
 - Twist
 - Adaptation:
 - Avoid the fingering in music
 - Ask the student to use 3rd finger only
-

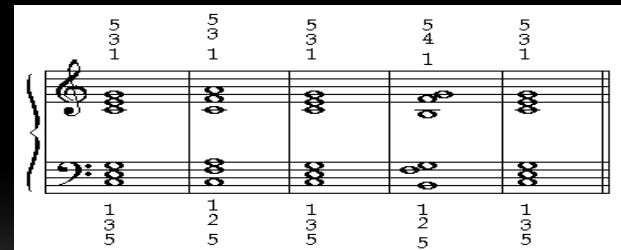
AVOID FIVE FINGER POSITION

- Reasoning:
 - Alignment
 - Finger Spreading
 - “Inline” Fingers
 - Twist and Ulnar Deviation
 - *Carpal tunnel syndrome*
 - *Tendonitis*
- Method Books:
 - Theoretical bit
 - Derives from thumb and legato
 - Five finger position endorsements
- Adaptation:
 - Avoid
 - Change fingering
 - Skip pieces
 - Five finger positions are not dangerous in intermediate stages



EARLY CADENCES

- Reasoning:
 - Small hands
 - Control
 - Twist
- Method books:
 - Theoretical knowledge
 - Cadences
 - Composing
 - Improvisation
- Adaptation:
 - Start with bass notes
 - Start with open fifth
 - Leave the chords for later
 - Play the chords yourself
 - If necessary separate theoretical knowledge from playing



Thomas Mark states “... a teaching method based on finger movements isolated from supporting movements in the rest of the body is not harmless. It is dangerous”

Fingers

Wrists

“ELEMENTS THAT METHOD
BOOKS WILL NOT TEACH”

Shoulders

Elbows

“Three Points”

Computer Programs

Method Books

PIANO TEACHER IS EVERYTHING

THE REST IS SECONDARY

Apps

Online Blogs

ONLINE RESOURCES

MTNA - Health in Music Teaching

- www.MTNA.org

Performing Arts Medicine Association:

- <http://www.artsmed.org/>

NASM-PAMA Advisories on Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health:

- <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/publications/brochures-advisories/nasm-pama-nms-vocal-health/>

CMS Webinar Achieve (free):

- <http://Music.org>

Golansky Institute:

- <https://www.golanskyinstitute.org/>

Keyboard Wellness Institute:

- <https://www.keyboardwellnessseminar.com/>

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