

Virginia State University
Department of Music



Non Major Health and
Safety Manual

2024 Edition

Student Health Issues

First and foremost, students should take care of their overall physical and mental health. This includes:

- eating regular and balanced meals
- getting an appropriate amount of rest
- balancing work and relaxation
- maintaining a clean living/working environment
- seeking counseling

Virginia law requires all full-time students to submit health evaluation forms. They include immunization records, a Tuberculosis screening, and a health history. Students who have not met this requirement will have Holds place on their accounts. This action will prevent access to grades and transcripts, and will also prevent students from registering for courses. The Health Evaluation Checklist is available at <https://www.vsu.edu/files/docs/health-services/health-evaluation-form1.pdf>.

VSU schedules period Wellness Days. This is part of the University's Trojan Health and Wellness (THAW) initiative, the mission of which is to "Promote the holistic wellness of Virginia State University students and other community stakeholders." THAW is comprised of the Health, Student Accessibility, and Wellness Centers. One of the activities held is the Mental Health Awareness Walk. A list of the workshops scheduled for 2024 may be accessed at <https://www.vsu.edu/healthservices/>. They include Anger Management, Coping 101, and Grief.

The Office of Student Health Services is located in Memorial Hall. Information about what is offered may be accessed at <https://www.vsu.edu/healthservices/health-center.php>. That site also offers information about after-hours and emergency services.

Some Suggested Resources:

Emotional Safety - <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/ihe/safety/emotional-safety>

Substance Abuse - <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/ihe/safety/substance-abuse>

<https://www.onlinecolleges.net/for-students/student-health-wellness-guide/>

<https://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/student-life/blog/college-students-quick-guide-to-health-taking-care-of-your-body/>

<https://www.mbastack.org/a-college-students-guide-to-managing-health-and-nutrition/>

Mental Health and Self-Care at HBCUs: Why it Matters (July 2023) -

<https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/our-stories/stories/2023/07/14/mental-health-self-care-at-hbcus-why-it-matters>

Musicians' Health Issues

As a member of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the institution is required to provide information to its students about musician's health issues.

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA) have developed a comprehensive set of jointly authored advisory documents on neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health for musicians. (See Appendix I for brief NASM-PAMA guides on hearing, vocal, and neuromusculoskeletal health.)

(<https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/publications/brochures-advisories/nasm-pama-nms-vocal-health/>)
A music student guide is available at https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/02/4a_NASM_PAMA_NMH-Student_Guide-Standard_June-2014.pdf.

According to the aforementioned guide, the “neuromusculoskeletal system refers to the complex system of muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments, and associated nerves and tissues that support our body's physical structure and enable movement.” The guide continues to explain that “the term ‘neuromusculoskeletal’ is used to encompass not only overt physical movements (the pressing of a key, the strumming of a string) and overall body alignment, but also the small internal movements our bodies make, for example to produce breath and modify vocal sounds.”

All of the ensemble directors and applied music instructors in the Department of Music are highly qualified and experienced in their respective areas. During ensemble rehearsals and applied lessons, they will inform students about various topics, including, but not limited to,

- warm-up techniques, including stretching and vocalizing
- practice techniques, including how long to practice and when to take breaks
- how to plan effective practice sessions

During the applied lessons, the instructors will ensure that students demonstrate techniques that they have been taught. These techniques will be reinforced during Studio Classes.

Directors of ensembles will be responsible for setting standards for warm-up and practice techniques appropriate for their respective ensembles. They will also determine the acceptable decibel levels in their respective rehearsal/performance spaces. They will also instruct students in the various kinds of hearing protective devices available and provide students with devices.

The Department of Music invites professionals (e. g. audiologist and occupational therapists) to speak to students on a periodic basis. Also, information about various musicians' health issues is posted on the Department of Music Blackboard page. In order to reinforce the material presented and provided, students will be required to periodically complete tests/surveys on the information provided for them.

The Department of Music will be responsible for ensuring that proper acoustical materials be placed in Davis Hall. The effectiveness of these materials and their placement will be periodically evaluated, with adjustments/upgrades be made, if needed.

Information about practice techniques will be posted in the practice room area of Davis Hall.

Some Suggested Resources:

A Mindfulness Approach to Warm-Up for Musicians

<https://athletesandthearts.com/dev/wp-content/uploads/Mindfulness-Warm-Up-for-Musicians.pdf>

Hearing Protection Tips

<https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/blogs/six-hearing-protection-tips-for-musicians#:~:text=Give%20your%20ears%20sound%20breaks.&text=In%20an%20ideal%20world%2C%20aim,music%20directly%20in%20your%20ears.>

The Musician's Guide to Hearing Protection (Including information about musicians' earplugs)

<https://www.sweetwater.com/insync/musicians-guide-hearing-protection-doctor/>

Stretching Exercises for Musicians

<https://www.thestrad.com/playing-hub/11-stretching-exercises-for-musicians/27.article>

10 Essential Stretches for Musicians

<https://www.musicnotes.com/blog/stretches-for-musicians/>

Hearing Protection Devices—Filter Strength Recommendations

- Vocal/Choral – ER-9
- Instrumental, Amplified Environment – ER-15
- Percussion – ER-25
- Maximum blocking devices are recommended for loud levels or long exposure.

APPENDIX I: NASA-PAMA Information Sheets

Protecting Your Hearing Health

An NASM–PAMA Student Information Sheet on Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Hearing health is essential to your lifelong success as a musician.

Your hearing can be permanently damaged by loud sounds, including music. Technically, this is called Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL). Such danger is constant.

Noise-induced hearing loss is generally preventable. You must avoid overexposure to loud sounds, especially for long periods of time.

The closer you are to the source of a loud sound, the greater the risk of damage to your hearing mechanisms.

Sounds over 85 dB (your typical vacuum cleaner) in intensity pose the greatest risk to your hearing. Risk of hearing loss is based on a combination of sound or loudness intensity and duration.

Recommended maximum daily exposure times (NIOSH) to sounds at or above 85 dB are as follows:

- 85 dB (vacuum cleaner, device with earbuds at 1/3 volume)–8 hours
- 90 dB (blender, hair dryer)–2 hours
- 94 dB (device with earbuds at 1/2 volume)–1 hour
- 100 dB (device with earbuds at full volume, lawnmower)–15 minutes
- 110 dB (rock concert, power tools) –2 minutes
- 120 dB (jet planes at take-off) –without ear protection, sound damage is almost immediate.

Certain behaviors (controlling volume levels in practice and rehearsal, avoiding noisy environments, turning down the volume) reduce your risk of hearing loss.

Be mindful of earbuds. Enable volume limiting hearing protection on your device.

The use of earplugs and earmuffs in louder environments helps to protect your hearing health.

Day-to-day decisions can impact your hearing health, both now and in the future. Since sound exposure occurs in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own hearing health on a daily, even hourly basis.

It is important to follow basic hearing health guidelines.

It is also important to study this issue and learn more.

If you are concerned about your personal hearing health, talk with a medical professional.

If you are concerned about your hearing health in relationship to your program of study, consult the appropriate contact person at your institution.

This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the other NASM-PAMA hearing health documents, located on the NASM Web site at the URL link:

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

Protecting Your Vocal Health

An NASM – PAMA Student Information Sheet

Vocal health is important for all musicians and essential to lifelong success for singers.

Understanding basic care of the voice is essential for musicians who speak, sing, and rehearse or teach others.

Practicing, rehearsing, and performing music is physically demanding.

Musicians are susceptible to numerous vocal disorders.

Many vocal disorders and conditions are preventable and/or treatable.

Sufficient warm-up time is important.

Begin warming up mid-range, and then slowly work outward to vocal pitch extremes.

Proper alignment, adequate breath support, and correct physical technique are essential.

Regular breaks during practice and rehearsal are vital in order to prevent undue physical or vocal stress and strain.

It is important to set a reasonable limit on the amount of time that you will practice in a day.

Avoid sudden increases in practice times.

Know your voice and its limits, and avoid overdoing it or misusing it.

Maintain healthy habits. Safeguard your physical and mental health.

Drink plenty of water in order to keep your vocal folds adequately lubricated. Limit your use of alcohol, and avoid smoking.

Day-to-day decisions can impact your vocal health, both now and in the future. Since vocal strain and a myriad of other injuries can occur in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own vocal health on a daily basis. Avoid shouting, screaming, or other strenuous vocal use.

If you are concerned about your personal vocal health, talk with a medical professional.

This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the other NASM-PAMA neuromusculoskeletal health documents, located on the NASM Web site at the URL linked below.

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

Protecting Your Neuromusculoskeletal Health

An NASM – PAMA Student Information Sheet

Neuromusculoskeletal health is essential to your lifelong success as a musician.

Practicing and performing music is physically demanding.

Musicians are susceptible to numerous neuromusculoskeletal disorders.

Some musculoskeletal disorders are related to behavior; others are genetic; still others are the result of trauma or injury. Some genetic conditions can increase a person's risk of developing certain behavior-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders.

Many neuromusculoskeletal disorders and conditions are preventable and/or treatable.

Sufficient physical and musical warm-up time is important.

Proper body alignment and correct physical technique are essential.

Regular breaks during practice and rehearsal are vital in order to prevent undue physical stress and strain.

It is important to set a reasonable limit on the amount of time that you will practice in a day. Avoid sudden increases in practice times.

Know your body and its limits and avoid “overdoing it.”

Maintain healthy habits. Safeguard your physical and mental health.

Day-to-day decisions can impact your neuromusculoskeletal health, both now and in the future.

Since muscle and joint strains and a myriad of other injuries can occur in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own neuromusculoskeletal health on a daily basis, particularly with regard to your performing medium and area of specialization.

If you are concerned about your personal neuromusculoskeletal health, talk with a medical professional.

This information is provided by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA). For more information, check out the other NASM-PAMA neuromusculoskeletal health documents, located on the NASM website:

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



Safety

You are primarily responsible for your safety on campus. Report anything that you see that seems to be suspicious. IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING. Identify your personal items and DO NOT leave them unattended.

If you wear ear pods, text, or are otherwise involved in other activities while you are walking around campus, you must try to find some way in which to still be aware of your surroundings. Try not to walk by yourself after dark.

The Department of Music will schedule periodic presentations by a representative from the VSU Department of Police and Public Safety.

Sign up for the RAVE Emergency Alert System by accessing <https://www.vsu.edu/police/campus-safety/rave-emergency-alert-system.php>.

If you are in Davis Hall during a weather emergency (for example, a hurricane warning), you should proceed to the ground floor hallway by Room G-26. Do not stop to gather your belongings. The Davis Hall Building Manager will schedule periodic drills in order that students will know the proper procedure to follow in case of a weather emergency.

If you are in Davis Hall when the fire alarm sounds, you should leave the building as quickly and safely as possible. Do not stop to gather your belongings. Do not use the elevator.

Be aware that the Areas of Rescue Assistance in Davis Hall are in each stairwell. If the building has to be evacuated, any person who is unable to use the stairs should go or be taken to one of these areas. The presence of anyone in an Area of Rescue Assistance should immediately be reported to a first responder.

The VSU Department of Police and Public Safety offers RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) courses. There are separate courses for women and for men, Students interested in taking the course should contact the DPPS.

Some Suggested Resources:

Physical Safety - <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/ihe/safety/physical-safety>

Campus Safety at HBCUs (August 2023) - <https://hbculifestyle.com/campus-safety-at-resilient-hbcus/>

Severe Weather Shelter Area

The Severe Weather Shelter Area in Davis Hall is located on the ground floor in the hallway outside of G-26. It is identified by the sign shown below.



The VSU Department of Police and Public Safety periodically conducts tests of the warning system. If you are outside in the proximity of Davis Hall and hear the siren, you should quickly move to this location. You will also be notified by the Rave Alert.