CLINICAL EXPERTS DELIVERING HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICES

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PERFORMING ARTS MEDICINE

Healthy Practice Diary

Your Priorities and Values

Creating your Routine

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Healthy Practice

Evidence from research tells us that around 75% of performing artists will experience a physical or mental health problem affecting their career at some point. Like athletes, professional musicians, dancers, actors and circus performers use their bodies intensively. Physical injury, overuse or misuse, chronic pain, anxiety and psychological burnout are common.

Performers often have no choice other than to attempt to maintain their careers, continuing to play, act, dance or sing while suffering from and managing physical symptoms. These are exacerbated by and may contribute to psychological and emotional issues. The environment (e.g. long hours, working late, isolation, experiencing lack of sleep and a poor diet) and the high demands performers make on themselves can all potentially lead to deteriorating physical and mental health and resilience. Schedules often mean that healthcare is not available when most needed.

All of these factors can impact negatively on the success of creative practice, the longer term sustainability of a career and the health and wellbeing of the individuals themselves. Planning for a healthy career can help to prevent or mitigate some of these problems.

The Healthy Practice Diary for Performers has been developed as the result of a review of the available evidence, consultation with experts in the field of Performing Arts Medicine and an evaluation of a series of health education sessions with artists awarded funding by Help Musicians for touring and recording.

Knowing what you *should* do to keep healthy is one thing. But putting this knowledge to use by adopting healthy practice as routine in your life will change the way you think about your career, help you achieve your goals sustainably, and support lifelong creativity.

We are grateful to our original healthy touring panel, our trainers, Lucy Heyman, Dr Helen Brice, Dr Pippa Wheble, Denise Devenish, Adam Ficek, Sarah Worsley-Harris, Sarah Upjohn, Louise Curley and Help Musicians.

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Healthy Practice Checklist

Answer the following questions circling yes or no…

Are you:

○ Maintaining a healthy diet?	Yes	No
○ Keeping hydrated?	Yes	No
○ Getting enough sleep?	Yes	No
○ Maintaining relationships outside your performance life?	Yes	No
○ Doing regular exercise?	Yes	No
○ Getting outside enough?	Yes	No
○ Moderating your use of alcohol and drugs?	Yes	No
○ Smoking?	Yes	No
○ Using ear plugs?	Yes	No
○ Looking after your sexual health?	Yes	No
○ Dealing with conflict when it arises?	Yes	No
○ Recognising signs of stress or illness?	Yes	No

Have you:

○ Got the right (comfortable) equipment?	Yes	No
○ Got a daily routine?	Yes	No
○ Made a plan for your down time?	Yes	No
○ Got a space where you can work at home	Yes	No
○ Identified any current health problems?	Yes	No
○ Had an assessment and advice about all existing health problems?	Yes	No

Do you:

○ Take regular breaks?	Yes	No

○ Have a pre-practice and post-practice routine, including warm ups and cool downs?	Yes	No
○ Do a regular mental health practice?	Yes	No
○ Have realistic expectations about how your work (or performance) may go?	Yes	No
○ Do mental practice	Yes	No
○ Manage social media - and time away from it?	Yes	No
○ Have a plan for what you'll do after your current project?	Yes	No

Your Healthy Practice Priorities

Look at the **"Nos"** circled above. Choose and list your top 5 healthy practice priorities to work on during this programme.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Creating Goals

Now that you have identified your priorities, it is important to consider how each one can be achieved. Setting GOALS helps to break down the steps towards achieving the outcomes that you want.

Goals should be **SMART** – **S**imple, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime Sensitive.

For each priority, consider what you want to achieve, what that will bring you and what steps need to be taken to move towards your goal.

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Complete a priority plan for each of your priorities using the suggested template on the next page.

SMART GOAL: PRIORITY

1. **What** do I want to achieve?

2. **How** will I know that I have achieved it?

3. Can I **realistically** achieve it?

- What steps will I take?

- What support do I need?

4. **Why** is this goal important to me?

5. **When** will I do this by?

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Creating a Daily Routine

There are always constraints on our time! To create a routine, you must first be aware of the time that you have and your priorities for that time.

- You may be sharing living space with others, negotiating and adapting your routine on a daily basis.
- You may have caring responsibilities or other jobs to earn a living.
- Whatever your constraints and priorities, it is possible to build a routine.
- Plan what you can, be realistic and be kind to yourself too.
- Try using apps and reminders on your smartphone to help you.

Exercise: My Ideal Life

1) Add your new GOALS to the list of activities.
2) Map out the time you have spent on each activity over the last 2 weeks.
3) For each activity consider: What is your ideal routine?
4) Rank the importance of each activity for you (1 = the most important).

ACTIVITY	CURRENT ROUTINE	IDEAL ROUTINE	RANK
Sleeping			
Eating			
Physical Exercise			
Mental Health Practice			
Practice on Instrument			
Practice off Instrument			
Work			
Business Administration			
Connecting (family/ friends)			
Social Media			
Rest & Recovery			
Time Outside			
Caffeine			

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Smoking			
GOAL 1:			
GOAL 2:			
GOAL 3:			
GOAL 4:			
GOAL 5:			

Creating Sustainable Change

Before we start re-inventing the wheel, let's have a reality check!

It can be hard to create new habits and behaviours. Human beings are incredibly efficient and the way that we learn to do things is always to follow the path of least resistance. Familiarity is easy and it is a trap!

When the way we do something is causing us harm or no longer the healthy choice for us, we can decide to do things differently. We can learn anything!

To achieve mastery, we need to repeat a skill 10,000 times.
To learn a new behaviour, we need to apply it consistently for 40 days.

If you change just one thing and stick to it for 40 days, you have an 80% chance of creating a permanent change in your behaviour.

If you try and change 2 or 3 things at the same time, you have a much lower chance of sticking to any of your resolutions.

To have the best chance of success, you will need to prioritise.

- In your SMART Goals you will see that there are: ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN.
- In your IDEAL Life you will see that there are: HABITS TO CHANGE.
- You have already ranked these in ORDER OF PRIORITY.
- You have ALREADY COMMITTED to achieving these goals!

What is one thing that you could do every day that will support you to achieve your top priority goals and behaviours? Are you willing to do it?

(E.g. 5 minutes of mindfulness every morning / No caffeine after 4pm).

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I commit to: _____

In what time/situations: _____

This will give me:_____

Signed:_____ **Date:** _____

Exercise: My Ideal Routine:

Now you know what your priorities are, you are ready to explore what your ideal routine looks like. Choose colours and codes that work for you and fill out this weekly planner using the following steps:

1) Start by scheduling the daily commitment that you just made (if relevant).
2) Next schedule the activity that you ranked 1 in the ideal life exercise.
3) Add each activity from the ideal life exercise in order of rank.
4) Be realistic about how often and for how long you will do each activity.
5) Each day, schedule at least 1 of the action points from your GOALS.
6) Be willing, creative and flexible and you can have everything you want!

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Keeping a Diary

There are lots of free apps for keeping a diary or journaling. You may prefer writing in a notebook, recording or pictures. Whatever works best for you, but include:

- Your goals – big and small
- Your routine
- Whether you have managed to keep to your routine or meet your goals each day and what helped or got in the way – use that insight to update your daily routine and goals going forward
- Check in with yourself and record how you are feeling mentally and physically each day. You don't have to write a lot – smiley and sad faces tell the story.
- Celebrate your achievements