

The Musician Body Check

Your body is your instrument too. A weekly check and simple routines to keep you playing and singing for decades.

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Weekly body check

Every Sunday night, score yourself 1 (bad) to 5 (great). Watch for anything dropping two weeks in a row.

Area	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4
Ears (ringing / muffled after?)				
Voice (tired, hoarse?)				
Hands + wrists				
Neck + shoulders				
Back				
Sleep				
Energy				
Mood + motivation				

The rule

Pain that lasts, or gets worse when you play, is not something to push through. Rest it and get it checked early.

Your ears: safe limits

Hearing damage is permanent and adds up quietly. Rehearsals and drums often go past 100 dB.

EVERY +3 dB HALVES YOUR SAFE TIME

Sound level	Safe time per day	Like
85 dB	8 hours	Busy traffic
88 dB	4 hours	
91 dB	2 hours	Loud rehearsal
94 dB	1 hour	
97 dB	30 min	Full band on stage
100 dB	15 min	Drum kit up close

Earplugs	Musician earplugs (flat filters) for rehearsals. They lower volume without making it sound muffled.
In-ears	Keep them as low as you can still play well. Turn them down before you start.
60/60	Headphones: no more than about 60% volume for 60 minutes, then a break.
Ringling	Ringling after a gig is a warning sign. Give your ears quiet time.
Test	Get a hearing test from an audiologist, and repeat it regularly.

8-minute stretch routine

Before rehearsal and after. Gentle, never into pain. Hold each for about 20 seconds.

1 min**Shoulder rolls**

Big slow circles back, then forward.

1 min**Neck tilts**

Ear toward shoulder each side. No rolling the head backwards.

1 min**Wrist flexors**

Arm out, palm up, gently pull fingers back with the other hand. Both sides.

1 min**Wrist extensors**

Arm out, palm down, gently press the back of the hand down.

1 min**Finger spread**

Spread wide, make a soft fist. Repeat 10 times.

1 min**Chest opener**

Hands clasped behind your back, lift gently, shoulders down.

1 min**Spine twist**

Seated, turn gently left and right. Breathe.

1 min**Hip flexor**

Lunge stance, tuck the hips. Great after long keyboard or drum sets.

Posture by instrument

Small setup changes stop most aches before they start.

Keys

Elbows level with or slightly above the keys. Wrists straight, not dropped. Bench far enough back to lean in.

Guitar / bass

Strap the same height sitting and standing. Neck angled up a little. Thumb relaxed behind the neck.

Drums

Throne high enough that thighs slope slightly down. Cymbals low enough you don't reach up all night.

Singers

Mic stand at mouth height so you don't tilt your head. Weight even on both feet.

Standing sets

Supportive shoes. A mat if you stand still on hard floors. Shift your weight.

At the desk

Screen at eye height. Feet flat. Get up every 45 minutes when editing or mixing.

Gig-day sleep + fuel

Late nights and skipped meals catch up with you on stage.

FUEL

3 hrs before	A real meal: protein, slow carbs, veg. Nothing heavy or greasy.
1 hr before	Light snack if needed: banana, nuts, crackers. Water.
During	Water on stage, sip between songs.
After	Eat something proper, not just fast food at midnight.

SLEEP

Caffeine	Keep it to earlier in the day so you can sleep after a late gig.
Wind down	After a late gig, 30 minutes of low light and no screens before bed.
Same wake time	Try to wake at a similar time, even after late nights. Nap 20 minutes if you need to.
Sunday double	Morning service after a Saturday gig? Pack your bag before you leave on Saturday.

Nerves + burnout

Your mind plays every note too. Look after it like your gear.

BEFORE YOU PLAY

Box breathing In 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4. Four rounds before you walk on.

Routine Same pre-stage routine every time: water, stretch, pray, one breath. Familiar = calm.

Reframe The racing heart is energy, not danger. Tell yourself "I'm ready", not "calm down".

Prepare The best cure for nerves is knowing the songs cold.

BURNOUT

Signs Dreading what you used to love. Constant tiredness. Irritable with your team. Playing on autopilot.

Do Take a week off rotation. Play just for joy. Say no to one thing.

Talk Tell your leader, a friend, a pastor or a counsellor. You don't have to carry it alone.

Note

General wellbeing information, not medical advice. If you're struggling, please reach out to a health professional.

You're ready.

Your career is long. Look after the instrument you can't replace.

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