

## **The Musicians' Health & Performance. 5th Nordic Conference 2025**

### **Abstract Submission**

**Title:** A Performative Autoethnography on Pianism Retraining for the Rehabilitation of Musicians' Focal Hand Dystonia

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Musicians' focal hand dystonia (MFHD) is a task-specific neurological movement disorder that impairs sensorimotor accuracies. Among musicians, classical pianists are found to be most susceptible to the disorder, considering that the discipline demands highly intense repetitive practice of a similar musical task. In pianists, MFHD typically manifests as an involuntary extension and/or flexion of the finger(s) while playing on the keyboard. Several research has reported on the effectiveness of pedagogical retraining in the treatment of MFHD. However, the procedures and protocols of retraining lack delineation. In the context of this study, pianism retraining will be the focus topic. This pedagogical intervention aims to re-educate a pianist's physical and mental approach to piano playing so that optimal instrumental techniques can be cultivated to replace the ingrained dystonic movement patterns. The researcher, who is a sufferer of MFHD would like to share her current experiences on pianism retraining with a demonstration of pianistic exercises for restoring finger control. Each exercise will be elucidated on its procedures and purposes. This is to provide a better understanding of their application and practical benefits. MFHD is essentially a disorder that is difficult to treat. However, rehabilitative approaches like pianism retraining have shown promise in providing long-lasting benefits to dystonic pianists, including the researcher herself. Therefore, continued research into the underlying processes of pianism retraining should be carried out so that future design of retraining strategies can be improved appropriately and their practicality can be enhanced.