

To prevent and alleviate playing related musculoskeletal or stress-related problems-activities among professional Swedish big band musicians

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## Background

Musculoskeletal problems and stress are common among professional musicians. Knowledge is limited about what musicians do to prevent or alleviate these problems. Increased knowledge is therefore important for prevention and treatment with the aim of improving health and well-being among musicians.

## Aim

To explore what activities professional Big band musicians engage in to prevent or alleviate playing related musculoskeletal or stress-related problems.

## Methods

Three professional Swedish big bands participated in this cross-sectional study. Thirty-two of 35 musicians participated. Questions were asked about preventive or alleviating activities, non-prescription analgesics, and the frequency of playing during vacations.

## Results

The three most common activities were: taking breaks when practicing, holding the instrument in a relaxed manner, and being physically active. An open-ended question revealed several complementary activities, both physical, mental and social. Sixteen of 32 musicians rarely or never used non-prescription analgesics,

while the rest did so to varying degrees. All musicians played their main instrument less when they were on vacation, and one in four almost never.

## Conclusions

The most common activities were related directly to the situation in connection with playing the instrument, but both physical, mental and social activities outside this situation were also mentioned as preventive or alleviating. Furthermore, during vacation the physical exposure by playing the instrument was markedly reduced.