

Coming Back from Injury and Injury Avoidance (one person's journey) Alan Siebert

Injuries are not all that uncommon for brass players, particularly trumpet and horn players. As a teacher, I have seen or experienced all of the following:

I. Types of Injuries

- a. Overuse
- b. Mouthpiece pressure
- c. Muscle strain/stretched
- d. Muscle tears

All of these are largely preventable. Often these are a result of extreme activity after long periods of less/no activity (like, playing the trumpet hard for several hours after a layoff, or without warming up properly.

II. Allergies & other medical issues

- a. food
- b. metal
- c. cold sores
- d. canker sores

These are generally not preventable, but can be dealt with in effective ways.

III. Embouchure Dystonia: Definition - is a movement disorder in which a person's muscles contract uncontrollably. The contraction causes the affected body part to twist involuntarily, resulting in repetitive movements or abnormal postures. Dystonia can affect one muscle, a muscle group, or the entire body. Generally, it is only preventable with immediate cessation of playing. There seems to be no medical cure to this, but non-medical techniques seem to be effective. It is a neurological condition.

The following seem to be effective:

- Alexander Technique: Is a method that works to change (movement) habits in our everyday activities. It is a simple and practical method for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination. The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for a particular activity, giving you more energy for all your activities. It is not a series of treatments or exercises, but rather a reeducation of the mind and body. The Alexander Technique is a method which helps a person discover a new balance in the body by releasing unnecessary tension. It can be applied to sitting, lying down, standing, walking, lifting, and other daily activities. (from <http://www.alexandertechnique.com>)

- Feldenkrais: The Feldenkrais method is an educational system that allows the body to move and function more efficiently and comfortably. Its goal is to re-educate the body and improve motor ability. The system can accomplish much more, relieving pressure on joints and weak points and allowing the body to heal repetitive strain injuries.

- Body Mapping : A person's body map is their perception, understanding and experience of their own body-shape and size, plus how and where their own joints move and how their body functions. Sometimes we have an accurate sense of our body map and generally move with poise and an easy co-ordination

IV. Dental

- a. braces
- b. caps/veneers
- c. shifting teeth
- d. TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint Disorder)

V. Online Sources

<http://www.distoniadelmusico.com/>

<http://www.embouchuredystonia.com>

<http://www.embouchures.com/>

<http://lipripblues.com/>

<http://www.artsmed.org/member-publications>

<http://jazztimes.com/articles/25549-lip-injuries-trumpet-playing-an-unhappy-marriage>

<http://www.trumpetherald.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=1090056>

<http://www.davidvining.net/narrative.html> (dystonia)

VI. Print Sources

Hickman, David: Trumpet Pedagogy: A Compendium of Modern Teaching Techniques, Hickman Music Editions (out of print, CD version out soon)

Lewis, Lucinda: Broken Embouchures, Oscar's House Press (available online and at www.embouchures.com)