

Injury Prevention for Musicians

London Hand Therapy provides specialist assessment and holistic rehabilitation services to anyone with hand, wrist, forearm, shoulder or neck injuries.

Katherine Butler started an exciting new phenomenon in 2009 with the idea of Musicians Medicine Master Classes. The focus of the study days was preventative medicine as well as treatment and assessment techniques for musicians. The first was in May with The Metropolitan Orchestra and Lisbon Conservatorium of Music and the second was in October for the Irish Hand Therapy Association in Dublin. Musicians were assessed in front of an

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audience, both on and off their instruments and relevant diagnosis, treatment techniques and home exercises were discussed.

The beauty of these sessions has been that many musicians, medical practitioners and allied health workers can attend the study days. They widen their knowledge of preventative measures and relevant paths to take when they themselves, a

colleague or music student present with a medical condition. An exciting aspect of these study days has been the increased awareness of the need to seek the appropriate relevant medical attention early, to gain a correct diagnosis and treatment plan and to reintroduce the musician to playing their musical instrument as soon as is physically possible. If conditions are treated quickly, thoroughly and appropriately then the musician can often gain a better outcome with less intervention and fewer other inconveniences such as financial and emotional strains.

Encouragingly, many musicians do not require surgery, but rather a retraining programme that includes instruction in healthy practice habits, stretches, decreasing practice sessions into smaller more regular periods and balancing their playing schedule with other activities.



Photo: Eric Richmond

Katherine Butler

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Clinical Specialist in
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Hand Therapy

Hand therapy is both an art and a rehabilitation science for the upper extremity. The injured limb is evaluated and assessed, and a variety of treatment methods are used to achieve set therapeutic goals.

The focus of treatment is to enable the individual to continue or return to activities that they enjoyed or were required to perform prior to injury or the onset of their condition. Post operative patients can have their entire requirement met including dressing changes,

suture removal, scar care, fabrication of bespoke splints, and exercise programmes. Postural assessment and advice on work station set up or musical instrument interface can be provided as necessary.

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London Hand Therapy

London Hand Therapy has two convenient locations, one in the West End and the other in the City. Both are easily accessible by many means of public transport and clinics are open from 8am to 7pm to provide a variety of appointment times. People can self refer or be recommended by a specialist consultant, general practitioner, university or orchestra.

Sometimes a single session is all that is required, and a home exercise programme can be implemented. If further treatment sessions are necessary then only the required number are carried out, thus respecting the patient’s time and finances. There are a number of funding options for patients that may require financial assistance to access the services of London Hand Therapy and The Royal Society of Musicians can provide the relevant contact details.

Katherine Butler

As a trained musician herself, Katherine enjoys combining her love for music and the upper limb and has invaluable insight into life and the related pressures of being a musician. She established London Hand Therapy in 2006 with the aim of providing first class private assessment and treatment for musicians with hand and upper limb conditions.

Katherine has been working in the specialist area of Hand Therapy since 1995 and is one of a few fully Accredited Hand Therapists with The British Association of Hand Therapists. As a recipient of the highly prestigious Queen’s Trust Award Australia she came to London to study and work with Dr Christopher Wynn Parry and Mr Ian Winspur in the area of performing arts medicine. She has lectured and published widely, established two hand therapy units, worked as a research therapist and is currently performing doctoral research with Dr Karin Rosenkranz in the area of Focal Hand Dystonia affecting musicians.

London Hand Therapy

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