

The Musician as the Athlete: Psychological Response to Injury

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Abstract : Athletes experience injuries that can have both a physical and psychological impact on the individual. In such instances, athletes are able to rely on the established field of sports psychology to facilitate holistic rehabilitation. Musicians, like athletes rely on their bodies to perform in much the same way athletes do and are also susceptible to injury. Due to the similar performative nature of succeeding as an athlete or a musician, these careers share many of the same primary psychological concerns and therefore it is reasonable that athletes and musicians may require similar rehabilitation post-injury. However, musicians face their own unique psychological challenges and understanding the needs of an injured athlete can serve as a foundation for understanding the injured musician but is not enough to fully rehabilitate an injured musician. The current research surrounding musicians and their injuries is primarily focused on physiological aspects of injury and rehabilitation; the psychological aspects have not yet received adequate attention resulting in poor musician rehabilitation post-injury. This review paper uses current models of psychological response to injury in athletes to draw parallels with the psychological response to injury in musicians. Search engines such as Medline and PsycInfo were systematically searched using specific key words, such as psychological response, injury, athlete, and musician. Studies that focused on post-injury psychology of either the musician or the athlete were included. Within the literature there is evidence to support psychological responses, unique to the musician, that are not accounted for by current models of response in athletes. The models of psychological response to injury in athletes are inadequate tools for application to the musician. Future directions for performance arts research that can fill the gaps in our understanding and modeling of musicians' response to injury are discussed. A better understanding of the psychological impact of injuries on musicians holds significant implications for health care practitioners working with injured musicians. Understanding the unique barriers musicians face post-injury, and how support for this population must be tailored to properly suit musicians' needs will aid in more holistic rehabilitation and a higher likelihood of musician's returning to pre-injury performance levels.

Keywords : athlete, injury, musician, psychological response

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