

“Minimal effort, maximum efficiency”

- I. Introduction
 - A. Who am I?
 - B. Why am I interested in this topic?
 1. Always been a very physical, athletic person
 2. Discovered Dalcroze and movement training - felt so good!
 3. When I was 30, had to redo technique, and everything I learned about body awareness made re-training so much easier!
 - C. What we're going to cover today
 - D. Brainstorm: What are some physical challenges to playing harp? (Cue: what kinds of things is your teacher always saying?)

- II. The basics of Posture & Alignment
 - A. Posture: what you look like
 - B. Alignment: the optimal relationship of parts at rest or in motion
 - C. Focus: Axial skeleton

SLIDES: spine posture, grid photo series, tower crane, air dancer

EXPERIMENT: grid yourself; draw your skeleton

- III. What makes alignment possible? Every body part has a role to play!
 - Pelvis
 - Abdomen
 - Back
 - Shoulders
 - Chest/lungs
 - Upper arms
 - Lower arms
 - Elbow
 - Wrist
 - Hand
 - fingers

- IV. Joints - they're all connected!

SLIDE: picture of a joint

- A. Why joint care is important
- B. How to care for joints - move! Crack those knuckles!

EXPERIMENT: get to know your joints- find their full range of motion

STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

Before practice- It starts with our mental state - fear? Judgement? Curiosity?

- 1-2 min. of stillness
- Root to rise
- Cat-cow (floor and seated version)
- Reaching under for shoulder stretch
- Neck exercises
- Abdomen engagement - Pilates

During practice

Something not right? Start with structure, not fingers

- Relaxed?
 - Breathing
 - Tensing/relaxing exercise
 - Tension is not a bad thing
- Too much tension?
 - create more
 - Knocking on heaven's door
 - Shaking
 - Get up, walk around
- Rooted? Lifted?
 - Strong Abdomen
 - Cue: pull belly button toward spine and up
 - Chest open (naturally draws shoulders down)
 - Lift arms from elbows

After practice

Celebrate!

Supporting activities: pilates, massage, dance, swimming (don't over work the arms)

V. Wrap-up/questions?

Workshop summary:

As a musician, you are an elite athlete and your primary instrument is your body. (This is especially true for harpists, who play a particularly physically demanding instrument!) How we tune, regulate, care for, and use the body greatly affects the way we play the harp. The more awareness we have of our body, our primary instrument, the more effective and efficient we can be in our practice with minimal effort. In this workshop, we will take a close look at how the body is structured and the role that each part plays when we're at the harp. You will learn practical exercises/activities to use before, during, and after practice and in life. We will address topics such as tension, fatigue, chronic pain. Wear comfy clothing. Access to a yoga mat or equivalent floor space is encouraged.

