

Healthy Touring

Introduction

BAPAM have made this draft guidance available while it is finalised for publication with Help Musicians UK. If you'd like to give us any feedback, suggestions for additional items for the checklist or resources that can help, please email claire.cordeaux@bapam.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

Touring is a fundamental part of the life of performance professionals and, as much as it is exhilarating, it can also be intense and tiring. During this period health problems which are unmanaged can be exacerbated, and new health problems can arise. Evidence from research tells us that around 75% of performers have health problems. Like many athletes who use their bodies intensively, physical problems and pain are common and, as freelancers, performing arts professionals often have no choice other than to attempt to maintain their careers, continuing to work while suffering from and managing physical symptoms. These problems are exacerbated by, and contribute to, psychosocial issues. The touring environment (with pressures relating to travel, working late, experiencing lack of sleep and a poor diet) and the high demands artists and crew make on themselves can all lead, potentially, to deteriorating mental health. Schedules often mean that healthcare is not available when most needed.

All of these factors can impact on the success of performances, the longer-term sustainability of a career and the individuals themselves.

Planning for a healthy tour can help to avoid or mitigate some of these problems. The Healthy Touring Checklist has been developed as the result of a review of the evidence, consultation with experts, and an evaluation of a series of healthy touring sessions with artists awarded funding for touring by the Help Musicians Do It Differently fund.

It should be used by performers and managers as part of planning for a tour and also includes suggestions for a **Health Rider** to help people involved with the tour to support artists to remain healthy.

- *Being able to discuss our touring practices with someone was very valuable, it's not often that you're able to sit down and think about how you could improve these practices. It can feel very isolating at times so it was really good and constructive*
- *We were able to reflect and see that the things which we found stressful and difficult about touring were actually an amalgamation of small things, most of which we could do something practical about improving*
- *Effective ways to warm up my vocals & easily incorporate the warm ups to my usual pre-performance routine*
- *Helpful strategies for coping with performance stress, work life balance and general wellbeing*

Healthy Touring Checklist

Are you:

- Maintaining a healthy diet?
- Getting enough sleep?
- Maintaining relationships whilst away?
- Doing regular exercise?
- Moderating your use of alcohol and drugs?
- Using ear plugs?
- Looking after your sexual health?
- Dealing with conflict when it arises?
- Recognising signs of stress or illness?

Have you:

- Ordered enough medication for your tour (if required)?
- Sorted insurance?
- Organised safe spaces before the gig if you need them?
- Factored recovery time into the schedule?
- Planned how to maintain a comfortable level of cleanliness including laundering clothes?
- Made a plan for your downtime?
- Made sure you know if your band members have any health needs they would like support with?
- Identified any health problems and had a clinical assessment and advice before you go?

Do you have:

- A pre-performance routine?
- A realistic expectation about how shows may go?
- A plan for how to interact with fans or audience members after the show?
- A social media plan?
- A plan for what you'll do after the tour when you get back?

Are you:

- Looking after your vocal health?
- Doing warm-ups before a show?
- Doing cool-downs after a show?

Creating a Health Rider

Including some basic health requirements in a rider can make it easier to maintain your health, as well as helping managers, promoters and venues support you in staying healthy and giving your best performance.

Use the checklist above to define some of the facilities you will need. Examples are below. Not all of these will be possible, or relevant to you, but it is well worth thinking about how to help others to keep you healthy.

Scheduling: Downtime needs to be scheduled into the tour. Artists will prefer to perform the day after a long journey so that they are properly rested. Everyone is trying to keep fit during the tour and breaks should be scheduled to enable artists to do their exercise of choice.

Space: A quiet space, in the venue or elsewhere, for recovering from travel, preparing for the performance and post-performance recovery.

Food and Drink: Fresh fruit, water and non-alcoholic drink options should be available

Dietary requirements:

Washing and laundry facilities:

Post-performance:

Press and Interviews: Half an hour will be available for this. Please note that vocalists may need to be resting their voices – evidence shows that talking in noisy spaces after a performance is often when vocal damage occurs, so a quiet space for interviews is appreciated.

“Early” nights: Artists are trying to ensure that they get enough sleep over the course of the tour and will want to get to bed at a reasonable time.

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