Effects of meditation on music performance anxiety

Citation metadata
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Date: Sept. 2003
From: Medical Problems of Performing Artists (Vol. 18, Issue 3)
Publisher: Science & Medicine
Document Type: Clinical report
Length: 3,832 words

Main content
Article Preview :
Abstract--This study investigated the effect of meditation on music performance anxiety. Participants were 19 students between the ages of 18 and 41 yrs, who were recruited from the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music, Yale University School of Music, and State University of New York at Purchase. The experimental group received a series of eight meditation classes, and the control group received no meditation training. After the 8-week training period, all performed in a concert. Pretests and post-tests of music performance anxiety were given and post-tests of state anxiety and of performance concentration. Performance anxiety decreased among participants in the meditation group, in contrast to participants in the control group, whose performance anxiety did not decrease. Differences in regard to post-test state anxiety and performance concentration were not significant. An additional benefit of meditation was a reported increase in relaxation pleasure even in the period immediately before the performance. Results indicate that meditation may be a useful tool for aiding performers to combat performance anxiety.

Music performance anxiety is a problem for most professional and college musicians, according to several studies. (1-3) In a survey, 66% of musicians and college music students reported that they experience performance anxiety. (2) The importance and pervasiveness of music performance anxiety underscore the need for intervention techniques. Among the techniques that have been employed and systematically investigated are the Alexander technique, (4) systematic desensitization, (5) biofeedback, (6) and cognitive restructuring. (7) This study was designed to investigate the efficacy of a technique that has not been investigated previously among musicians--meditation.

The choice of meditation was made for several reasons. First, research on music anxiety has indicated that an important component of the anxiety suffered by musical performers is the fear of audience evaluation, apparently based on the fear of losing audience love and on the fear of being embarrassed in front of large groups. Although the effects of meditation on musical performance anxiety have not yet been studied, meditation has been found to reduce anxiety in situations that are similar to the music performance situation. (8) Meditation has been linked to reductions in anxiety over public speaking, (9) wherein a type of performance before audiences is involved. Meditation also is associated with reductions in test anxiety. (10-12) Because a component of performance anxiety is a fear of evaluation, a technique that has the effect of reducing test anxiety may be useful. Second, college music students and professional musicians cover a wide range of ages, from adolescence to older adulthood. Research indicates that meditation is a technique that can yield reductions in anxiety in people ranging from childhood through late life. (10,13)

Meditation also seems to be a promising technique on an a priori basis. Successful performances require not only that anxiety be reduced to an optimal level, but also that certain functions be enhanced. That is, the performer needs to be free of debilitating tension and of catastrophizing thoughts, while maintaining a controlled alertness, concentration, and discipline. Meditation is a technique designed...

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Gale Document Number: GALE|A173187334
The healing effects of music on human beings is being explored. The effect of sound on proteins provides new insight into the health of plants and human beings. The increased yield and the improved vitality of the plant ingredients by music are very beneficial human consumption. Brain. The Zen12 Meditation in mood genre has several sub-genres like happy, psyched, melancholic etc. There are playlists for acoustic concentration, noise, Zen focus, deep focus, intense studying and natural concentration. Music is best for preoperative anxiety and the anxiety related to dental procedures. It reduces post-surgical stress and pain and decreased the symptoms of depression in elderly people. Mood. Meditation. By taking a permanent meditative breather from the "hamster wheel" of anxiety, you no longer burn through precious resources or waste valuable energy on unproductive fear-based thoughts. What does this mean, exactly? No more negative "what-if" scenarios, no more "next-turn" catastrophes, no more "doom and gloom" waiting around every corner, the meditative mindset is a beautiful thing. In effect, the researchers found that meditation was in a cool, calm, and happy "league of its own." Joggers have coined the term "runners high" to describe how wonderful they feel after a nice, long run. This euphoric, happy, and zen-like state of bliss goes a long way to explain why so many of them look forward to hitting the pavement, day after day.