

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF MARCHING BAND

INSTRUMENTS & OTHER PARADE INSTRUMENTS ON THE BODY

Marching band is more than music—it's an athletic activity that strengthens the body and mind. Understanding its effects helps keep young musicians **healthy, safe, and performing their best!**

HOW IT AFFECTS THE BODY

 CARDIOVASCULAR - Improves cardiovascular fitness and endurance - Heart rate may rise to 120–180 bpm during performance - Promotes healthy circulation Stay hydrated and condition gradually.	 RESPIRATORY - Strengthens lung capacity and breathing muscles - Improves breath control and coordination - Wind instruments require deep inspiration and controlled expiration Good for lung health—pace and technique matter.	 INTRATHORACIC PRESSURE - Brass players generate high mouth pressures - May temporarily increase intrathoracic, venous, blood, and intraocular pressure Individuals with certain heart or eye conditions may need precautions.	 MUSCULOSKELETAL - Uses major muscle groups in arms, shoulders, back, core, and legs - Heavy instruments can cause strain and fatigue - Proper technique and conditioning reduce injury risk Strong posture and core strength are key.	 NEUROLOGICAL & COGNITIVE - Improves coordination, balance, and reaction time - Enhances multitasking, focus, and spatial awareness - Supports memory, attention, and learning Music builds a stronger brain!
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INSTRUMENT-SPECIFIC EFFECTS

 BRASS INSTRUMENTS - High expiratory pressures - Increased facial muscle workload - May increase intrathoracic pressure Use strong embouchure technique and take regular breaks.	 WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS - Require fine motor control and finger dexterity - Sustained breath support - Mouthpiece or reed may cause lip irritation Keep hands, lips, and instrument clean and well-maintained.	 PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS - High upper-body workload - Repetitive impact can stress shoulders, wrists, and elbows - Risk of overuse injuries Use proper technique, warm up, and strengthen supporting muscles.	 COLOR GUARD & DANCE - Demands flexibility, strength, and endurance - Involves jumping, spinning, and rapid movements - Risk of ankle, knee, and lower back injuries Condition, stretch, and wear supportive footwear.
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OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

 HEAT & HYDRATION Outdoor rehearsals in heat increase risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Hydrate early and often. Replace fluids and electrolytes.	 HEARING HEALTH Sound levels can exceed 90–110 dB from instruments and environments. Use musician earplugs to protect hearing.	 JOINT & INJURY PREVENTION Repetitive marching can stress knees, ankles, hips, and feet. Wear proper footwear and increase training gradually.	 NUTRITION & RECOVERY Eat balanced meals with carbs and protein. Don't skip meals. Hydrate before, during, and after rehearsals.	 SKIN CARE Prevent blisters, pressure sores, sunburn, and skin irritation. Use padding, sunscreen, and moisture control.	 MENTAL WELL-BEING Music reduces stress, builds confidence, and promotes teamwork and belonging. Celebrate progress and enjoy the journey!
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SAFETY TIPS

- Warm up before rehearsals and stretch after.
- Strengthen core, shoulders, and flexibility.
- Use proper technique and posture.
- Take regular breaks and listen to your body.
- Stay hydrated and avoid skipping meals.
- Wear properly fitted shoes and equipment.
- Use hearing protection.
- Report dizziness, chest pain, palpitations, fainting, or unusual shortness of breath immediately.



WHO NEEDS MEDICAL CLEARANCE?

Children with the following conditions should receive individualized guidance from their pediatric cardiologist:

- Complex congenital heart disease
- Fontan circulation
- Cardiomyopathy
- History of syncope during exercise
- Significant arrhythmias
- Implanted pacemakers or ICDs (varies by condition)
- Pulmonary hypertension
- Severe valve disease

When in doubt, get checked out!
Safety comes first.

SAFETY PEARLS

- Marching band is a form of moderate-to-vigorous physical exercise.
- Wind instruments strengthen respiratory muscles but may increase intrathoracic pressure.
- Heavy instruments can strain neck, shoulders, and back.
- Outdoor heat requires aggressive hydration and heat illness prevention.
- Hearing protection helps prevent long-term hearing loss.
- Most healthy children can participate safely with proper conditioning.



Dr. Shabib Alhadheri, MD
Advanced Pediatric Cardiology

1478 W Elliot Rd, Suite 102
Gilbert, AZ 85233

480-855-1339

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