

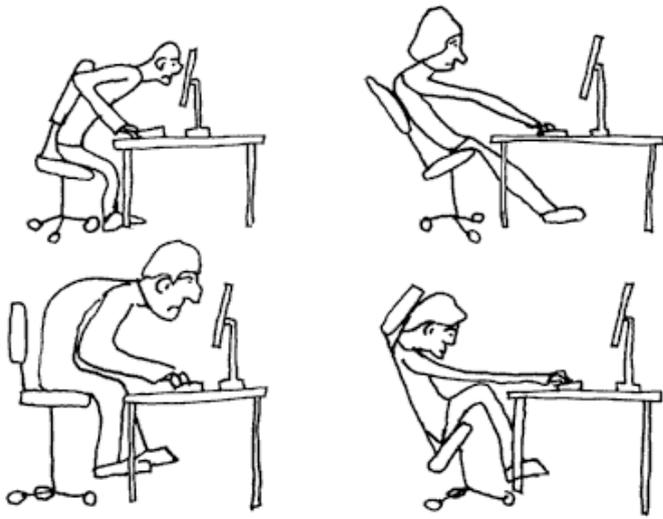
*By Chris DeRosa*

In this entry I wanted to talk about drumming health. There are three aspects to this important balance: (1) **physical**: eating right and exercising; (2) **mental**: taking time off to refresh and gain clarity; and (3) **spiritual**: the need to think outside our problems and world through meditation or prayer.

Today I wanted to specifically address the physical. I've been drumming since I was eleven years old and never really thought too much about my physical body and its upkeep. I have always been very active and blessed with good genes in regards to healing and health. I've also considered myself an athlete in a way because of the physical demands drumming requires, but it didn't go much further than that thought.

Over years of practice and performing, the repetitive movements we do create some strain and stress on individual body parts and muscles. At times, I will drum as much as eight hours in a single day. This demand from our bodies over time can develop into a chronic condition. I had this unlucky situation come to my attention recently.

Earlier this year, over the course of several weeks, my lower back was becoming stiff and eventually grew very painful. This



BAD POSTURE (EXAMPLES OF)

continued to the point that after about six weeks of this progression I was at times barely able to get out of bed. All my life I have been blessed with a body that heals quickly, and if I just work through it, it would fix itself in time. Much to my dismay, this time would be different.

I am fortunate enough to have a very good M.D. nearby my home, so I limped my way over to see him. After a few very specific tests my doctor found what appeared to be a condition that developed (and went unnoticed) over a long period of time. Specifically my L5/S1 (a vertebrae in the lower middle back) was slightly compressed, causing my muscles to both compensate and my spine to twist in a not so drum-friendly way.

What I soon realized was that with a recent apartment move I had started sleeping

in a new bed frame. Each morning when I would sit up in bed and answer my emails etc., I was sitting in a new less friendly position in regards to my back (now known as L5/S1). Unknowingly I aggravated this condition to the point of my then present state of limited mobility and absolutely no drumming fun.

The positive thing was that after learning the source of my pain (and about my then unknown condition) I was able to not only fix the immediate problem but also address the bigger long-term situation.

This also got me thinking about my set-up and, more importantly, my seat. I realized I have had the same drum throne for more then ten years. I quickly went out and researched the various thrones available and replaced my old Honda seat with a new hi-tech Cadillac.

**“Prevention goes a long way. Listen to your body.”**



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I am happy to report that after several chiropractic/acupuncture sessions I was not only back up and running (blissfully drumming) but ultimately I was finally dealing with an ongoing condition until now not realized.

The point of all this is to strongly communicate to each of you to listen to your body. It's imperative to not only try and prevent any potential injuries that our drumming can cause, but that we also each take the time to stretch before and after practice, rehearsals, and shows. It's impossible to do what we do as drummers (including lifting heavy gear) and not go unscathed over the course of time. Trying to make exercise a regular part of our routine will go a long way towards this prevention.

Since my recovery I have made three new decisions regarding my physical health:

- Started a weekly yoga regime.
- Sought out and bought the highest quality chondroitin glucosamine supplement to add to my diet.
- Committed to getting a chiropractic adjustment at regular intervals to keep everything in line.

Remember, don't take your health for granted. Prevention goes a long way. If you have any questions please send them to: [mail@chrisderosa.com](mailto:mail@chrisderosa.com) ☯

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