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GIG FIT

Create & Maintain a Health & Fitness Regime For Your Band



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Introduction

How many times have we cancelled a gig because someone has lost their voice? How many artists have we proposed for residencies and after two weeks they are sent home because they simply cannot hack it? How many times do we get the last minute phone call “I’m sick – I have a migraine – I cut my hand – I have the flu” And then we scramble to find a suitable replacement at the last minute for the venue who suffer financial loss from advertising costs while the artist misses out on income as well as loses credibility with the venue. It’s tough all round.

When I was gigging in the 1980s and 1990s in the good old bad old days of the Queensland Cover Circuit, up to 11 gigs a week were standard for a covers artist in Brisbane. I was one of those artists calling in sick all the time and had to learn to pace myself through the sets and through the nights. I was seeing a Chinese Acupuncturist for energy, getting Vitamin B shots and taking anything I possibly could to assist my voice in making it through so many gigs every single week. Subsequently I learned many tricks to enable me to sing through so many gigs week after week.

Yup those days are long gone however the message remains the same.

The best way to get the most out of your gigging time is to become and remain Gig Fit. This necessitates a strategy for more than just your physical health and requires you to make a long term commitment to yourself, your health and your music business.

This guide is designed to start you on the road to creating a health and fitness regime specifically for you and your act so you can get the most out of your voice and energy and ultimately your business.

Cover Yourself

These days, most venues are managed by Corporate Hospitality groups. Compliance and Risk Management is their number one priority. The present requirements are as following:

- \$10 million Public Liability Insurance
- Work Method Statement
- Tag and Test Certificate every six months for your leads

Many artists ask us: "It's just a covers gig. Why would we bother?" Well, I can tell you the story of the young fellow who only last year got electrocuted at a gig on the Sunshine Coast. It fried his entire PA, the circuitry of the venue and went through his body and affected his heart. With no insurance he was stuck with all the bills and subsequently lost his house as a result of working through the financial maze in the after math.

Go to your gig right now in your head and see all the potential risks. There are countless. You and the venue are jointly responsible for Public Liability when you are gigging. The venue has a Workplace Health and Safety officer, Public Liability Insurance and Risk Management policies that govern their bar staff and security. When you enter into their workplace, it is your responsibility to demonstrate that you will manage your own risks and have a proven method of controlling how you do everything at your gig. This is YOUR responsibility.

What happens if one of your speakers falls on someone in the audience and you have no insurance? The person in the audience will take legal action against both the venue and the artist. The Venue has its compliances in place so the burden will rest on you the Artist. So take the stress out of your Gig life and get yourself covered with a decent Health & Equipment Insurance.



Train your band and your crew and delegate someone in your team to be the Workplace Health and Safety officer who makes sure that every gig is managed in accordance with your own Work Method Statement. (Of course if you are a Solo Artist then you handle everything.) When you arrive at each gig, make sure your WHSO introduces themselves to the manager on duty to check in for induction into the venue and what they expect in Risk Management. If you work there regularly you will soon know what to do.

Renew your Public Liability insurance annually and always email us a copy of your Certificate of Currency when you renew it. Keep us in the loop to cover yourself.

You're The Voice

Let's be frank here. You don't need to be the world's greatest vocalist to cut it in the music business. But you need to be consistent, in tune and to be able to deliver your sound at every performance.

What does your band sound like without the lead singer? 90% of our gig cancellations are due to vocalist's losing their voices. So this is the most important consideration in being Gig Fit.

Ever lost your voice after you belted it out in the last song of the first set and you have three more sets and three more gigs that weekend?

- Get formal singing lessons. That's when you pick up some valuable techniques about HOW to use your voice.
- Pace yourself. Don't give away the farm – take it easy – learn how to manage your voice and get the most out of it.

When you lose your voice try these – suck on American Ginseng root (Looks like ginger and tastes like shit but wow it really helps your vocal chords), Take Entertainers Secret or Propolis (buy it online), Swedish Bitters, Steam yourself in Tea Tree Oil, Get Regular Acupuncture.

Learn how to move your body – bend your knees, keep your neck straight, use your diaphragm

Don't forget your whisper days in between gigs – shut up – don't speak – give those chords a well-deserved holiday.

Jack Daniels may not be the best long term sustainable solution for your voice – it may give you an extra verse - tops. Stay away from sugar as it just annoys your vocal chords and totally irritates them.

If your vision is to work in the music business in the future then you and your vocals need a sustainable long term strategy. Without that voice of yours, you are nothing more than elevator music.

Get Physical

You have a lot to do when you are gigging and this takes much physical energy. You have to rehearse weekly and this may entail loading gear in and out of a rehearsal studio. Then there's the gigs. You load out of your house and into your car – out of your car and into the venue and onto the stage. Then you load off the stage, out of the venue, into your car, out of your car and back into your house or wherever you store your gear. Gig three times and rehearse once a week and that's 34 Loads. This isn't even taking into consideration the gig itself – four hours of high energy performance! Wow! You seriously need to be fit to do this every single week.

So we suggest you commence a Cardio and Weights program just twice a week to build your strength and help you find more energy to maintain your gig schedule.

There is a high statistic of musicians that need Knee and Back Surgery in their 50s and 60s after decades of gigging and loading in. Do bend your knees when lifting, strengthen your core, do specific stretches to protect your body for this high repetition and strain. Work with a decent Chiropractor.

Use a trolley wherever possible ***one of your best investments!!! Use gloves when loading in. Share the load – make sure everyone in the band pitches in.

Get your mind and body and heart in synch and the energy will flow!



Eat Properly

If you have a day job or a family and you find yourself running to your Friday night gigs without eating properly, it's time for you to stop and find a new strategy. You need to have a good decent meal before the gig – a few hours before – not 10 minutes before you jump on stage. Pack it the night before if you need to. Fresh fruit, handful of nuts, protein bars or shakes – fuel yourself up before the gig to get maximum energy flow.

One big rule of thumb - don't eat during or after the gig. Drink plenty of water and eat small snacks like nuts or fruit. But no big meals after you start on stage.

Eating after the gig used to be a South East Queensland ritual. Many of us in local cover bands would meet at a certain service station on the way home from Toowoomba at 2am on a Saturday morning to chow down and get over the big nights together. Trouble was it was horrible food filled with salt, grease and fat. Tasted great but seriously unhealthy! As it is rare to find an organic health food store open at that time, plan ahead and pack some healthy snacks if you need a little energy to get you home.

Avoid junk food – not just at the gig – but overall. It's cheaper anyway, better for your long term health, giving you more energy and better sleep. This helps after backing up after 3am gigs on the weekend and then back to your day job on Monday. Tune into your body and give it what it needs not what your mind craves to sooth you.

Implement a new way of eating. Buy fruit and vegies and healthy snacks to save money and keep you gig fit.

Drink plenty of water – stay hydrated throughout the gig. Keep a water bottle handy on stage beside you. Don't drink from the tap. Drink filtered alkaline water. Otherwise the fluoride in it will turn you into a zombie.

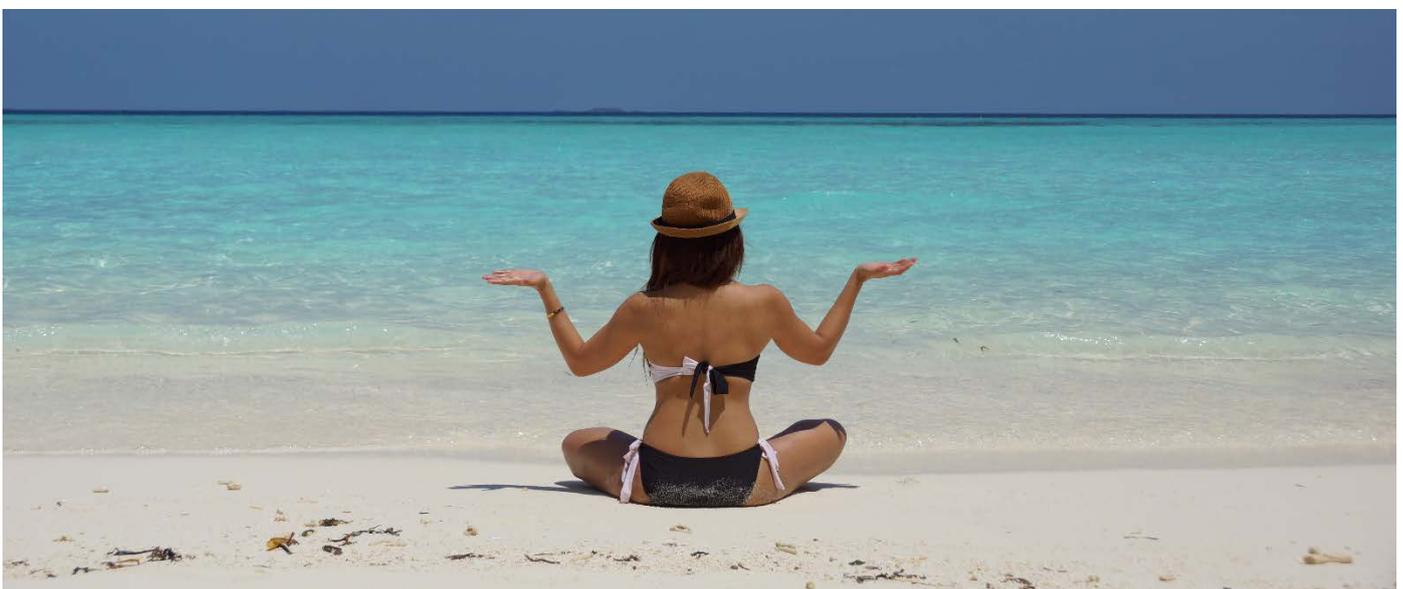
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Look after your diet with plenty of protein for strength and good carbs for energy.

Tune out and Tune In

Get your mind right and the rest will follow! Holding into worry and stress about things outside of your control just really stuffs you up energy wise. Yoga and Meditation helps to increase your mindfulness and energy and costs you nothing while you reap the energy benefit.

Take the time each week to tune out of the noise of your life and tune into yourself. Revisit the vision you have of your Music Business. What are your goals? What are your dreams? See yourself in your future vision and feel the peace and joy of it. Tune into you and find the soundtrack that you will write. Hear the music of YOU and allow it to unfold and reveal itself to the world.

Find your centre so you can get the most out of your Gigging. Be clear about why you are gigging and stay focused on your end goals. Every tiny step forward is a step closer to that dream. Every rehearsal. Every gig. Every interview. Every song. Every person that you interact with. One step closer in each breath.



Sleep On It

Sigh. Sleep. What a challenge it is to gig late on the weekends and then try to fit into a 9 to 5 schedule during the week. This activity alone makes the drug companies wealthy. Organise your life and your sleep patterns. Go hard core. It's worth it. Get to bed early on Monday night and catch up on your sleep with at least 10 hours in a row and get your sleep back into the weekly rhythm.

- Take afternoon naps on the weekend.
- Get Good Quality Sleep. Sleep in a room with an even temperature. Close the curtains, minimise the noise and bliss out.

Backing Up

As well as the hard drive, back up when you do more than two gigs in a row. Want to be famous? Get into practice now. How would you handle after parties, press junkets and a concert run if two gigs a weekend knocks you out? Put a strategy in place to maximize your Gig Fitness so you CAN back up consistently. Simply get into the habit of forward planning.

Time Management

Rehearsing, learning your own parts, setting up, pulling down, gear maintenance, car maintenance, gig administration, gig marketing, day job, relationship juggle, family – man, you have a lot of stuff to do when you are gigging! So you really only have one option and that is to get organised.

- Get yourself and your band organised – delegate tasks and have weekly meetings at rehearsals to keep everything in check – manage your band in Google – Docs, Drive, Calendar
- Connect your emails to your iPhone and schedule everything in your Calendar and set yourself alarms to stay on track
- Save all gig contracts to your phone
- Set up a system that tracks all gigs, payments and marketing
- Set yourself daily, weekly, monthly and yearly goals – schedule everything in your Google calendar.

Breaks

Breaks can suck so much energy and you can lose your voice just by screaming to be heard. So use this time off stage to rest, recover and recuperate away from the stage area.

Connect with the Crowd on stage or after the show - not your breaks.

Don't talk over loud music. Sit in a quiet spot away from the crowd.



Make this commitment to yourself to maintain Gig Fitness.

Communication

- Keep in constant touch with your band members during the week so everyone is prepared for the gigs that coming weekend
- Keep each other on track and be accountable to each other as essentially this is your business together.



About Us

Established in 1990 by [Manny Kyriakidis](#) and [Nichola Burton](#), [The Pushworth Group](#) is an Australian full-service agency encompassing bookings, tours, event management, web design, marketing and publicity, artist roster has been home to Grammy, ARIA and APRA award winners for more than two decades. As one of the most respected and longest run agencies in the country, Pushworth has played a fundamental role in Australian events and the careers of entertainers for over 26 years.

Our passion is to build Business with you.

This is the bottom line when working with Venues, Pubs, Clubs, Festivals or Performing Artists Businesses. Whether a suburban pub or an inner city nightclub, a regional hotel or a music festival, a corporate function or a private party. Whether emerging or established, whether big or small, whether it is to earn money playing someone else's music OR to perform your own music – it doesn't matter. We love to work with people of all types to build and develop their business for the long term -whether it is a place where music can be heard and seen OR the music itself.

There are many sides to business in this industry as in every industry. It takes a massive vision, a good solid plan, a competent hard working team and a whole swag of strategies to hold firm to the Vision YOU have for your Venue Culture, Event or your Music. Ranging from international tours to working with pubs and clubs to utilize entertainment more effectively in their marketing campaigns, corporate to community events, web design and publicity campaigns; Pushworth's boutique stable of services are among the country's most in-demand. Our Team covers four different generations with each team member in their own right bringing a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to the Pushworth table for the benefit of our clients. We offer a continuity of market knowledge and experience unmatched by any other entertainment service company in Queensland.

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