



## What Health Professionals Do

### Choosing a health practitioner

At this stage, Australia does not have a formal category of health practitioners specializing in the performing arts. However, there are practitioners within many of the disciplines listed below who have expertise in the specific health needs of performing artists. Check below to find which type of practitioner suits your needs, and then search ASPAH's online Directory of Members for a practitioner in your area and finally check on [www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx) that the practitioner is legally registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA).

### Acupuncturists

Acupuncture is the insertion of very thin needles through your skin to improve overall wellness and stress management.

### Alexander Technique trainers

A practical method for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination.

### Chinese Medicine practitioners

Chinese Medicine aims to maintain physical, emotional, and spiritual balance in order to prevent and treat disease. Modalities include acupuncture, moxibustion, herbal medicine, Chinese massage, tai chi, qi gong, nutrition, and lifestyle modification.

### Chiropractors

Chiropractic is the diagnosis, management and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system, using hands-on spinal manipulation and other treatments.

### Counsellors

Counsellors generally focus on short-term solution-focussed strategies for dealing with specific life events such as bereavement, relationship problems, and domestic violence.

### Dietitians

Dietitians assess, diagnose and treat nutritional problems according to the client's health and individual needs.

### Ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialists

An ENT specialist is a doctor who specialises in diseases that affect the ears, nose and throat, as well as the head and neck. They treat a wide range of problems including deafness, loss of balance, allergies, speech and voice, tumours and infections.

### Exercise physiologists

Exercise physiologists offer health education, exercise counselling and physical rehabilitation. They prescribe tailored exercise programs, promote leisure-time and incidental activity, and advise on reducing sedentary behaviours.

### Feldenkrais teachers

A system of gentle movements that promote flexibility, coordination, and self-awareness.

### Fitness or personal trainers/gym instructors

These instructors help the general public to increase fitness and improve aesthetics by losing weight and toning up.

### General practitioners (GPs)

GPs (also known as doctors or physicians) diagnose and treat physical and mental illness, disease and injury. If necessary, they can refer you for tests or to see other health professionals. A GP referral ensures that specialist visits attract a Medicare rebate. GPs can also refer you to services that may cover some of the costs of seeing a large range of allied health professionals.

### Medical specialists

Specialists are doctors who have completed extensive additional training in a specific area. Some specialise as surgeons and some as non-surgical physicians. There are specialist physicians and surgeons in most areas of medicine.



## **Osteopaths**

Osteopaths focus on how the skeleton, joints, muscles, nerves, circulation, connective tissue and internal organs function as a holistic unit. Treatment may include manual therapy (mobilisation, stretching, massage and manipulation for ligaments and joints), exercise therapy, lifestyle advice and patient education.

## **Physiotherapists**

Physiotherapists assess, diagnose, treat, and prevent a wide range of health conditions and movement disorders. Their expertise covers injury prevention, acute care, rehabilitation, maintenance of functional mobility, chronic disease management, patient education and occupational health. They work closely with GPs and other health clinicians to plan and manage treatment.

## **Pilates instructors**

Exercises using special apparatus, designed to improve physical strength, flexibility, posture, and mental awareness.

## **Podiatrists**

Podiatrists (formerly known as chiropodists) prevent, diagnose and treat a wide range of foot and ankle problems. Treatment may include specific exercises, custom-made shoe inserts, or medications for skin conditions.

## **Psychiatrists**

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who have additional specialist training in diagnosing and treating a large range of mental health problems. Since psychiatrists are medical doctors, they can prescribe medication. Your GP can advise you and refer you to the type of psychiatrist or psychologist best suited to your needs.

## **Psychologists**

Psychologists are trained in how people think, feel, behave and learn. Some psychologists assess and diagnose mental illnesses and psychological problems, while others help people to recover from or self-manage other problems that can affect your performance, health and wellbeing. Your GP can refer you to the type of psychologist that suits your needs.

## **Psychotherapists**

Psychotherapists focus on assisting their clients to explore and understand aspects of themselves and their experience. They help their clients understand how past experiences influence and shape their current responses to life events.

## **Speech pathologists**

Speech pathologists (formerly called speech therapists) diagnose and treat communication disorders, including difficulties with speaking, listening, understanding language, reading, writing, social skills, stuttering, and using voice.

## **Sports physicians**

Sports physicians are doctors who have completed additional specialist training in sport and exercise medicine and have been awarded the title of Fellows of the Australasian College of Sports Physicians (FACSEP). Sportspeople, athletes and dancers often seek the help of sports physicians but they are expert in treating medical and health issues for all active people.

## **Sports doctors**

Sports doctors, or sports medicine practitioners, are doctors with qualifications and/or an interest in sports medicine. They are not members of the Australasian College of Sports Physicians but may be affiliated with Sports Medicine Australia.

## **Strength and conditioning coaches**

A strength and conditioning coach works with fit, healthy, athletic people to improve performance.



# ASPAAH

Australian Society for  
Performing Arts Healthcare

## A Guide to Performing Arts Healthcare

ASPAAH is pleased to offer you this Guide which has been compiled by experts in the field. This is an example of ASPAAH's many resources, all designed to inform performers and those who work within the performing arts of current information that may assist their health and wellbeing.

By becoming an ASPAAH member, you will share in exciting new developments in the Australian performing arts healthcare landscape, including:

- A range of health care guides, posters, conference presentation videos and webinar recordings
- Professional listing in ASPAAH's online Directory of Members
- Access to a network of leading performing arts professionals, clinicians and researchers
- Discounted registration for ASPAAH conferences and other events
- Access to Local Chapter events
- Opportunity to run Local Chapter events
- Regular news about local, regional and national performing arts healthcare events
- Full annual subscription to *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*
- Free advertising in ASPAAH bi-monthly e-newsletters
- The right to vote and hold office in the Society

If you work in the performing arts in Australia, ASPAAH is *your* organisation. We encourage you to join our extensive membership of performing arts practitioners and organisations so you can access a wide range of ASPAAH Guides, conference videos, newsletters and events. To join and/or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact [admin@aspah.org.au](mailto:admin@aspah.org.au).

ASPAAH Guides include:

Acute Injury Care

Overuse and Chronic Injury Care

Understanding Pain

Australian's Health System

Safety in the Performing Arts

Healthcare Insurance Options

What Health Professionals Do

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NB: This ASPAAH Guide is intended as an educational resource only and does not replace professional advice. ASPAAH recommends that diagnosis and initial advice is always obtained from an accredited healthcare professional.