

# RAKED STAGE AWARENESS & INJURY PREVENTION

with Mims Method Physical Therapy

## Cast & Crew Considerations

- A raked stage does not automatically cause injury, but it can exaggerate existing inefficiencies in posture, alignment, strength, balance, and movement patterns. Small compensations that may feel manageable on flat ground can accelerate quickly over the course of an 8-show week.
- The goal is to have more awareness of your body, patterns you're holding on stage and in the wings, and how to return to baseline.
- The more efficient and supported your movement patterns are, the better your body can tolerate the physical demands of the show.

The rake may increase:

- calf and Achilles loading/shortening when facing downstage
- knee and hip flexion demands
- trunk stability and control
- pelvic imbalance, especially when facing stage left or right
- low back extension when facing downstage
- fatigue and compensation patterns

Additional factors can impact stress on the body such as:

- heels, uneven costumes, props, puppets
- asymmetrical carrying/holding offstage

## WAYS TO ADAPT TO THE RAKE

- Front-to-Back Movement (when facing upstage or downstage)
  - Adjust primarily through the ankles rather than shearing/shifting the pelvis forward or leaning backward excessively.
- If performing in heels:
  - calves and Achilles will remain shortened
  - warm up ankles and calves before the show (ankle circles, balance, jumps)
  - stretch calves after the show
- Lateral/Sideways Movement Across the Rake
  - soften/bend the upstage leg to allow the pelvis to remain neutral
  - when squatting/landing from a jump, have a deeper bend into the downstage knee, neutral pelvis when possible, even weight distribution



## BACKSTAGE & WINGS

When standing in the wings while still on the rake:

- face directly upstage or downstage whenever possible
- avoid prolonged angled standing positions

**\*\*Even a few minutes in a more balanced position can add up significantly over weeks and months.\*\***

## QUICK CHANGE & BACKSTAGE SAFETY

Be aware of

- moving downstage too quickly, especially when holding objects
- pivoting on planted feet/narrow foot positioning on the rake
- visual awareness in low light environments
- fatigue late in the show week

Movement strategies

- use a wider stance
- engage your core when lifting or changing positions

## QUICK PRE-SHOW PREP

Your warm up should replicate the needed demands of your track/role.**\*\*\***

- Should consist of
  - 60s of movement to increase heart rate (jumping jacks, running in place, high knees, etc.)
  - Dynamic stretching (lengthening your muscles with movement)
  - Activation of muscles used
  - Mobility and stability at end ranges (for example: stability at the point that you are lifting something above your head)
- Some examples (on and off the rake):
  - ankle mobility rocks, calf raises, squats, hip flexor mobility, thoracic (midback) rotations, arm circles, push-ups, theraband series, balance holds/relevé balance

## STRENGTH & STABILITY FOCUS

Stay strong! This helps you do your job effectively and prevents injury.

### Core Stability

- planks/side planks, bird dogs, 90/90 holds

### Hip & Knee Stability

- Hip CARs, squats, lunges, deadlifts, single leg stability, clamshells, side leg lifts, band walks

### Ankle Stability

- inversion/eversion strengthening, single-leg balance work, calf raises (straight leg and bent knee)

### Arm/Overhead Strength

Especially for those who carry objects, fly monkeys, partner/lift, etc.

- Weight training (dumbbells, kettlebells, bands)
- Push ups, assisted pull ups, rotator cuff stability with bands/cables, rows

## RECOVERY AFTER SHOW

### Recommended:

- calf stretching (especially in heels)
- massage ball/foam rolling
- gentle thoracic and neck mobility, child's pose
- breathwork/meditation
- hydration, nutrition, and sleep\*\*\*

If you'd like an injury prevention screening at Mims Method PT, please reach out to stage management. If you'd like to have warm-ups/cool-downs for your specific track, sign up for a physical therapy spot and we'll help!

