

MOSH TIPS

How to survive a spring music festival

BY LISA SCHULZ

WHEN DRUMSTICKS CLASH against snares at breakneck speed and guitar riffs snarl in harmony, rock show attendees gather around a gaping circle in the crowd, like a boxing ring. Sly smiles erupt from those who take the center. Some remove their shirts, preparing to propel their bodies with music-driven energy.

"Moshpits are an outlet of frustration and excitement, with a fine line between the two," says Kevin Lyman, curator of the Vans Warped Tour, Rockstar Mayhem Festival and Taste of Chaos tour.

"It's that community spirit, that tribalism that goes along with music, and all of a sudden being in a moshpit makes you part of the tribe with bands," Lyman says.

Echo has tips to get the most out of your live-music experience this season, whether you're all about bloody noses and violent circle collisions at rock shows, or you need to know how to avoid them.

1. GET IN, OR STAY OUT

Bands feed off the energy of moshpits. If you're going in, be quick on your toes. If you're not, stay back to avoid getting pushed in. Joe Ambrose, author of *Moshpit Culture*, says spots nearest to the bar or in the back are best for avoiding pits. Lyman organized Warped Tour during daylight to prevent fights. "When you see the violence in clubs, sometimes it's by a very small group of people in the cover of darkness. You bring them out in the sunlight, they can't be assholes," he says.

2. MOSH OR SLAM, DON'T FLAIL

Executing moves that require flailing arms, such as the lawnmower, is just asking for bloody noses. "That's people trying to hurt people," Lyman says. "I don't think moshing was ever meant to hurt people."

3. FORGET THE ACCESSORIES

Mouthguards are an acceptable precaution, Lyman says, but leave your best clothes at home. Don't wear sunglasses or flip-flops in the pit. Instead, rock steel-toed boots for lengthy mosh sessions.

4. PREPARATION

While hydration and taking breaks during mosh sessions are mandatory for survival, increasing endurance is just as helpful. "The better physical shape you're in, the more you're going to enjoy yourself in the moshpit," Ambrose says.

"You'll meet other people that are in good shape, and it's nice to dance with them, like any other kind of dancing."

5. LEAVE NO MOSHER BEHIND

Rowdy behavior has an unspoken etiquette. If someone's on the ground, pick him or her up. Be willing to help people and be on the lookout for troublemakers.

"Generally moshpits are not deliberately nasty," Ambrose says. "They're very kind and very caring, nice places to be, but still, you can get hurt."

