



dance smart

A SMART BODY PUBLICATION

TRIA DANCE EXPERTS:



DON ASMUSSEN, MD (Center, photo)
Physician to dancers and member of International Association of Dance Medicine and Science.

MEREDITH BUTULIS, MPT of Life Rehab Services (Left, photo)
Physical therapist, professional dancer and choreographer, Pilates instructor, and former physical therapist to Radio City Rockettes and several Broadway performers.

SARAH PETRICH, DPT (Right, photo)
Doctorate level physical therapist, dance instructor, and has trained at LA's Tremaine Dance Studio and the Edge Performing Arts Center under a full scholarship.

tips to prevent injury

- **Turn your feet out** from your hips so that your knees line up with your toes. Pushing the turnout from your feet, also referred to as “screwing from the feet” may lead to serious knee injuries over time.
- **Lengthen through your spine** when bending backwards. Remember that your low back is made up of many joints, which all need to be used. Your low back is not a single hinge joint. Repetitively hinging in the low back very commonly causes back fractures, particularly in children, teens, and young adults.
- **Avoid overstretching** an injured or painful muscle. Overstretching will prolong recovery time.
- **If you have a new, or worsening injury**, remember that the first step is RICE—Rest, Ice, Compress, and Elevate.

These warning signs will help you know when to see a medical professional regarding an injury:

- Swelling around a joint
- Bruising along a muscle that is sore
- An unusual change in your flexibility
- Sharp or shooting pain
- Tingling or numbness
- A recurrent injury (i.e. multiple ankle sprains)
- An injury that has not gotten better within one week
- Pain limiting your abilities in everyday activities or dance
- Recurrent pain with a specific movement or dance skill



strength & stability

- Strengthening your core musculature, in methods such as Pilates, can help to decrease stress through all of your joints.
- Core strengthening methods can also increase your body awareness, leading to improved performance.

- Core stability is not created by doing sit ups or crunches.
- Your core is basically how ALL of your torso and some hip muscles work together. Doing crunches only works one of seven major muscles in the core, which creates muscle imbalances and potentially leads to injury, usually in the back or hips.



BUILD A STRONG CORE

CORE BODY EXERCISES for dancers



1

EXERCISE 1: In a face down position, balance on the tips of your toes and elbows while attempting to maintain a straight line from heels to head. Do not allow your back to sag. Hold for 15 seconds at first, then work your way up 5 seconds/week until you get to a minute.



2

EXERCISE 2: Lie lengthwise on foam roller, support spine from tailbone to head. Bend knees and keep feet flat on floor. Extend arms upward, in line with sternum, palms touching. Action: Engage core and extend one arm overhead toward floor as you lift the opposite leg, keeping knee bent. Return to starting position. Repeat movement for desired reps; alternating sides. Try to do this for 1 minute without wobbling.



3

EXERCISE 3: While they are strong, many dancers fail to have excellent coordination of back and hip strength. In an all 4's position, with back flat, extend a leg to hip height. Hold for 10 seconds. Return the leg to its starting position without twisting the spine. Repeat to the other side. Repeat 3-5x each side.



4

EXERCISE 4: Often, dancers arch from their low backs, instead of the upper backs. This is partially due to the lack of abdominal control while bending backwards. No amount of floor crunches will fix this or protect your back. You must strengthen the abs going into a back bend position. The stability crunch is one way to do this. Try three sets of 10 to start with.

Place the ball under the small of your back. Exhale and contract the abdominal muscles. Then do a crunch, maintaining a fist-size space between your chin and chest.

get inspired

"The Dancer believes that his art has something to say which cannot be expressed in words or in any other way than by dancing... there are times when the simple dignity of movement can fulfill the function of a volume of words.

There are movements which impinge upon the nerves with a strength that is incomparable, for movement has power to stir the senses and emotions, unique in itself. This is the dancer's justification for being, and his reason for searching further for deeper aspects of his art."

~Doris Humphrey, 1937,

when chronic pain hits... know your resources.

When pain doesn't go away, use the right resources to get back to your active lifestyle.

- ➔ Doctors: diagnosis, medical and surgical treatment of injury
- ➔ Physical Therapists: biomechanical evaluation, injury specific rehabilitation, instruction and implementation of an individualized home exercise program
- ➔ Dance Screening: TRIA offers a dance-specific screening done by a dance medicine physician & physical therapist.

