

Dance injury prevention

Dance injuries are different from team sport injuries. Dancers dance year-round with little rest. Dancers can prevent injuries by following several simple steps.

What are common dance injuries?

- Foot and ankle pain
- Muscle spasms
- Knee pain
- Dehydration
- Stress fractures
- Poor diet
- Back pain

How can I prevent dance injuries?

- Work with a dance teacher to learn correct technique. Dance with the right age group, level and style of class.
- Have a good stretching program to work your legs, back and arms.
- Have a good strengthening program for legs, back, shoulders and core. Dancers need long, lean and very strong muscles.
- Do drills that challenge your balance and body control.
- Include jumping and agility drills. These work on burst-like movements (plyometrics).
- Wear well-fitted shoes for the style of dance.
- Learn the correct dance techniques for the given style.
- Limit practice times by age to prevent over-fatigue.
- Drink plenty of water 30 minutes before dances. Drink both water and sports drinks during dances. Only drink sports drinks if practices or games are more than 90 minutes.
- Dance on smooth surfaces that:
 - Provide traction.
 - Give with impact (elevated wood floors, Marley floors, etc.).
- Use anti-slip powder on shoes and feet to stop falls.



What dance conditioning programs can help?

- Yoga
- Pilates technique
- Alexander technique

How should I warm up?

It is important to warm up. Dancers need to prepare their bodies for dance. A total warm-up will take 15-20 minutes.

- Start with 5 minutes of light aerobic activity. This helps raise the heart rate and warms up muscles.
- Do 10 minutes of dynamic stretches. Stretch your arms, legs and back.
- Finish with 5 minutes of full-speed leaps, jumps and turns.
- At the end of a practice:
 - Spend time stretching your whole body.
 - Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds.
 - Stretch for 10 to 15 minutes.

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