

DANCER TRANSITION
RESOURCE CENTRE

update

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Strength Training

Ginette recommends dancers spend more time on calisthenic exercises than weights. Calisthenics are simple movements that use your own body weight for resistance. Push-ups, pull-ups, crunches and triceps dips are all forms of calisthenics.

Core Stability

According to Ginette, 99% of her clients show patterns of weakness in their core muscles, the transversus abdominus (T.A.) and multifidus. And, when these subtle muscles are not working properly, injury is more likely to happen. Along with lack of core strength, dancers often show hypermobility in their lower spine, which means nerves that originate from that area often get compressed and can't do their job effectively. "Pilates is good for waking up the T.A., but even people who do Pilates have difficulty keeping length

between their vertebrae, which can mean the spine stays compressed," says Ginette. She says dancers need a core program that incorporates the multifidus as well as the T.A. This program should become part of the dancer's regular warm-up routine — before they do any stretching.

Learn How Your Body Works

Often, the images used by teachers and choreographers to facilitate movement can lead to misconceptions. Ginette says she's always surprised at the answers she receives when she asks dancers where precisely their hip joints are. She recommends dancers learn some basic anatomy so they can separate anatomical myth from reality in class and rehearsal and better understand how to keep their bodies safe.

When Injuries do Happen

During the first 48 hours after an acute injury, use the principles of R.I.C.E. - Rest, ice, compress and elevate the injury. After that, begin re-incorporating movement slowly based on the program designed by your rehabilitation specialist. Dancers should now apply heat to the injury or use contrast baths (submerge the area in alternately hot and cold water). Ginette recommends that all dancers formulate an injury plan so they know who to call and where to go in the case of injury.

Above All ... Listen to your body

"When you feel something in your body that isn't quite right, listen to it! It's your body's way of telling you that something's wrong," says Ginette.