



# Stretch & **STRENGTH** Workshop

with Sabina Budd

## Why is stretching important for dancers?

**Stretching** helps to increase flexibility since the body is already warmed up and more pliable. This increase in flexibility helps in preventing tight muscles. Having tight muscles increases the risk of injury and can restrict movement following a dance lesson.

While dancing is an enjoyable activity, it is highly physical and involves moving many parts of your body that are not habitually used to being moved on a daily basis.

Most people know the importance of stretching before a physical workout or activity, but there are many benefits to stretching after dancing.

## Why is stretching after dance lessons important?

### Reduced Muscle Pain

Stretching after a vigorous workout is crucial in clearing the body of a substance called “lactic acid”. Lactic acid is not particularly dangerous but can cause a burning sensation and pain in the muscles. This build-up is caused by the body’s need to use oxygen to break down glucose to create energy. If oxygen is in short supply, lactic acid is produced to convert the glucose. Stretching after dance lessons helps to eliminate this buildup from the body and reduce pain in the muscles.

From [www.elitedancestudio.net](http://www.elitedancestudio.net) Posted by [Elite Dance Studio](#) on Oct 27, 2019

## **Increased Flexibility**

Stretching helps to increase flexibility since the body is already warmed up and more pliable. This increase in flexibility helps in preventing tight muscles. Having tight muscles increases the risk of injury and can restrict movement following a dance lesson. This stiffness can be felt for 24-72 hours after a dance lesson and impede everyday activities.

Increased blood flow to the sore area, especially through stretching, can help reduce soreness and stiffness. Unfortunately, stretching will not eliminate all muscle pain but it can greatly alleviate it.

## **Body Cool Down**

Post-dance class stretching aids in cooling down the body and helps the heart and breathing return to their normal rates. Once the heart returns to a more regulated heart rate, it can resume circulating blood to the muscles.

When you are physically active, your breathing deepens in order to provide adequate oxygen to your blood and muscles. Post-dance stretching gives your lungs a chance to slow down and return your breathing to normal.

## **Avoid Fatigue**

Stretching after a dance lesson helps the body feel rested and relaxed instead of drained and fatigued. If you were to simply leave your dance lesson without a cool-down stretch, the blood that was previously coursing through your veins during the lesson at a quicker pace will pool in your limbs, making them feel heavy and tired. As you stretch and help to re-establish a normal flow of blood, you will avoid that heavy-limb feeling of fatigue and feel relaxed and refreshed instead.

## **Basic Stretches**

Remember when performing any stretch or exercise that you do not overextend yourself. Only move your body within comfortable, not painful, limits. Also, be mindful of bouncing during a stretch. Bouncing can increase the risk of muscle tear – try to use smooth and fluid motions while stretching.

## **Lower Body Stretch**

Sit on the floor and extend both legs out to the side as far as they can go. Bend one leg at the knee and place the bottom of your foot against the thigh of the extended leg. Keeping your back straight, reach toward the extended ankle. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Switch legs and repeat the stretch. Repeat 2-3 times per leg.

## **Shoulder Stretch**

Standing straight, bend your right arm at the elbow and reach behind your back as far to the left as possible. Hold your right arm with your left hand and gently push your right arm further to the left side. Hold for 8-10 seconds before repeating with the other arm.

## **Inner Thigh Stretch**

Sitting on the floor with your back straight, place the bottoms of your feet together and point your knees to the side. Bring your heels close to your body and push down on your thighs with your elbows. Hold for 20 seconds. Avoid bouncing your knees.

**Treat Your Body Right After Every Dance Lesson**

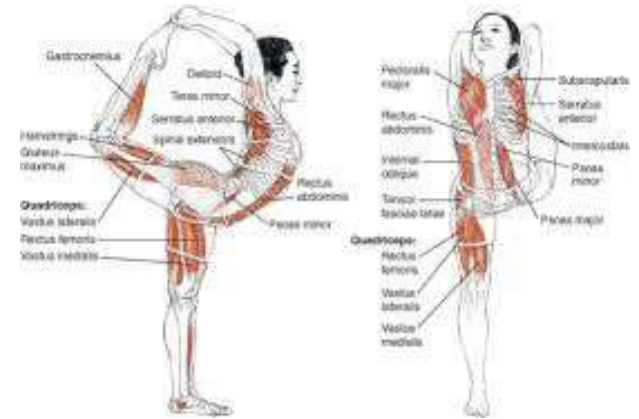
## Why is strength important for dancers?

Muscular strength creates speed and force, making for more powerful movement. Muscular strength provides support to the joints for the dancer so as not to compromise alignment and to increase position stability. This allows the dancer the ability to maintain the position for longer.

For instance, with strength training, you're dramatically improving the strength of not only your muscles, but also your tendons and ligaments, too. This helps to keep your body in the right alignment, protecting bones and joints during the impact of a performance or rehearsal.

## What muscles do you use when dancing?

Core: The dancer's centre, or core, involves a balance of stability and strength the **abdominal muscles (transversus abdominis, rectus abdominis, and external obliques)**, the **back muscles** and the pelvic floor diaphragm is also an important part of the dancer's core.



## Why Core Muscles Are Important For Dancers

Written by Dance Extreme Instructor Miss. Kayla, London, Ontario

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjf1cWrvePuAhUET98KHQk9CjEQFjACegQIARAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.danceextreme.com%2Fblog%2Fwhy-core-muscles-are-important-for-dancers%2F&usq=AOvVaw2iF-GNHQsRSkptC8T\\_yjVy](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjf1cWrvePuAhUET98KHQk9CjEQFjACegQIARAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.danceextreme.com%2Fblog%2Fwhy-core-muscles-are-important-for-dancers%2F&usq=AOvVaw2iF-GNHQsRSkptC8T_yjVy)

## Balancing the body

As well as improving the body's flexibility and bone structure, dancing also boosts stabilising core muscles to balance the body and make muscles and tendons less susceptible to injury. Coordination and reflexes are also strengthened through regular dancing workouts.

## What are the 5 physical and mental benefits of dancing?

Dancing bolsters physical and mental health by helping to prevent falls, improve posture and flexibility, lift mood and ease anxiety. It's also a fun activity that sharpens the mind, increases aerobic power and strength, builds social bonds, and can reduce pain and stiffness.

## The Muscle You Should Never Neglect If You Want to Avoid Injury

**Emma Sandall** Oct 05, 2020

By

<https://www.dancemagazine.com/ankle-injury-prevention-exercises-2647597107.html>

## 10 Tips for Stronger Calves

Mayes recommends implementing 16 to 24 heel raises into your daily class and an additional 30 to 35 heel raises three times a week on your own. The trick is in the technique.

1. Raise your heel at a speed of one second up and one second down—set a metronome to keep time!
2. Do it in parallel and on a single leg.
3. Keep the knee neutral—neither bent nor locked in hyperextension.
4. Go through your full pain-free range of motion with optimal control, and do not rest or sit in the joints at the end of the range.
5. Keep your toes long and flat.
6. Rise smoothly, without jerks.
7. Rise vertically. Don't use forward momentum to lift yourself up.
8. Keep the calf active the whole time.
9. Maintain good ankle/foot alignment, rising up through the center of the foot.
10. Ideally, you should feel the muscle burn in the belly of the calf. If you feel it check your alignment and technique.



## Other Interesting links:

Arts

**Alive.ca DANCE 101 from the National Arts Centre** <http://artsalive.ca/en/>  
**Human Anatomy Term**

**Glossary of**

dancer's instrument. Learn about body systems, bones, muscles, joints, common dance-related injuries and anatomical tidbits.

The body is the

**Strength and**

**Stretch Exercises for Dancers by Kathryn Morgan**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjnqsOXgOPuAhULn-AKHRkcBNAQFjABegQIBhAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Ddogo24RfAs&usg=AOvVaw05LYfW9nzajWMEWfBzniW4>

**Healing the Hamstrings by Bandha Yoga**

[https://www.bandhayoga.com/keys\\_hams.html?gclid=CjoKCQiAyJOBbDCARIsAJG2h5ca-IW2nBMYwFzOcURzBnRp4ly-Mt841sWzPLowkJBRKUlmUz9pU98aAsALEALw\\_wcB](https://www.bandhayoga.com/keys_hams.html?gclid=CjoKCQiAyJOBbDCARIsAJG2h5ca-IW2nBMYwFzOcURzBnRp4ly-Mt841sWzPLowkJBRKUlmUz9pU98aAsALEALw_wcB)

**The**

**5 Best Stretches for Dancers by Fred Astaire Studios**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjnqsOXgOPuAhULn-AKHRkcBNAQFjADegQICBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fredastaire.com%2Fbrookfield-wi%2Fblog%2F5-best-stretches-dancers%2F&usg=AOvVaw0Kb61K9XOuQnhGaPyyMvAz>

**The**

**Best Way to Warm Up for Dance Class by the Rockettes**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwitn8yrhOPuAhVvFVvkFHx9NB28QFjAFegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rockettes.com%2Fblog%2Fthe-best-ways-to-warm-up-before-dance-class%2F&usg=AOvVaw24xtGZEgZEUtwoFuzQHixq>





## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **Musculoskeletal System Quiz - google form /76**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KsWok5hLUHWrNdf\\_fxr7SjtKu6anqiHiP5eBl8fh\\_8s/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KsWok5hLUHWrNdf_fxr7SjtKu6anqiHiP5eBl8fh_8s/edit?usp=sharing)

### **Circuit Training**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZLeA8TTHgijQc2LR3obLjqEI36wcFdrn/view?usp=sharing>

### **Circuit Training**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pGcktvqdzB8FqjcuBQFHWSHacYHLBFCX/view?usp=sharing>

# THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

## THE ART OF CALF ENDURANCE

Musculoskeletal screening was performed on all Australian Ballet dancers in 2003

**Findings:** dancers with <25 single leg heel raises (SLHR) reported ankle pain in the previous six months

**Intervention:** SLHR (16-24 repetitions) was introduced into ballet class immediately after barre in 2005

**Outcome:** a substantial decline in ankle and calf time-loss injuries and only 3 ankle operations since 2005

### 1. SPEED

Slow. 1 second up, 1 second down.

### 2. PARALLEL

### 3. KNEE NEUTRAL

Not bent or hyperextended.

### 4. RANGE OF MOTION

Full pain free range, with optimal control.

### 5. TOES

Long and flat.

### 6. SMOOTH MOTION

### 7. VERTICAL

Avoid rocking forwards.

### 8. GASTROCENEMIUS

Active throughout range.

### 9. ALIGNMENT

Mid tibia aligned with 2nd metatarsal

### 10. NO CALF STRETCHING!



30 sec Calf Stretch  
30 sec. Quad Stretch  
30 sec. Toe Touch  
30 sec. Butterfly  
30 sec. Cobra  
30 sec. straddle stretch  
30 sec. splits stretch

