



# Dance Injuries

Dance is a beautiful art form. However, the physical and mental demands placed on dancers have been shown to make them just as susceptible as football players to injury. Getting and keeping dancers free of injury is key to helping them enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.

## **What are some of the most common dance injuries?**

Most professional dancers began dancing at an early age. The repetitive movements and pressure of perfectionism make them prime candidates for overuse injuries. These injuries tend to occur in the lower leg, foot, ankle, lower back and hip. The lower leg area is extremely vulnerable to a wide range of injuries, including stress fractures, tendon injuries, sprains and strains.

Stress fractures are also more prevalent in dancers with nutritional deficiencies. Without a balanced diet, recovery may be limited. As you continue to dance, stress, fatigue and metabolic waste will accumulate in your body. Please consult a physician or registered dietitian to make sure you're getting proper nutrition to avoid injuries caused by weak bones and low body weight.

## **What causes dance injuries?**

- Type of dance and frequency of classes, rehearsals and performances
- Duration of training
- Environmental conditions such as hard floors and cold studios
- Equipment used, especially shoes
- Individual dancer's body alignment and technical skills
- Prior history of injury
- Nutritional deficiencies weaken muscles and bones, making you more susceptible to injury

## How can dance injuries be prevented?

- Wear properly fitted technique and pointe shoes
- Drink plenty of fluids and maintain a nutritionally balanced diet
- Resist the temptation to dance through pain
- Pay close attention to correct technique and foot alignment
- Be mindful of the limits of your body and do not push too fast too soon
- Perform proper warm-up and cool-down
- Develop muscle strength, balance and flexibility
- Don't advance to the next level of training at an unsafe rate
- Ask a sports medicine professional about training, evaluation or injury questions
- Return to dance after an injury only when cleared by a health care professional

## How can parents help with injury prevention?

- Avoid pointe training until your feet and ankles have significant strength (age 12 is suggested)
- Be observant of any nutritional or psychological changes in your child, such as eating disorders or counterproductive perfectionism

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## Need immediate treatment for a dance injury?

The Children's Health<sup>SM</sup> Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine offers treatment for all sport-related injuries. Call to book your appointment today. With same-day and next-day appointments, we can get you in and back in the game.

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