

Why do Dance Injuries Occur?

As most dance injuries are a result of overuse and tend to be recurring, these injuries can be prevented by correcting the underlying risk factors, such as:

- Incomplete healing of previous injuries
- Incomplete recovery of strength and flexibility after an injury
- Learning of compensatory movement such as forcing a turn-out beyond one's natural range. This can put additional strain on the tendons that support the arches of the feet and ligaments at the knees
- Errors in dance technique
- Muscle weakness or inflexibility

What Can You do About it?

Early detection and complete the treatment course for your dance injuries, especially if they are reoccurring ones.

Alternatively, you can be proactive and undergo screening to check the following:

- Your physical attributes: apart from the usual assessments (height, weight), you will be assessed on the range of motion of your joints, degree of flexibility, posture and asymmetry
- Presence of pre-existing injuries that requires treatment
- Dance-specific functional tests to check your strength, balance and coordination
- Quality of your fundamental movements to look for inefficiency and presence of compensatory movements
- Aerobic test to gauge your aerobic fitness

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Department of
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

Dance Injury and Screening



Overview

Dance is primarily a performance art. However, it is also a physical discipline that exposes the body to training loads comparable to those of an athlete. Therefore, it can result in injuries.

Prevention or early treatment of injuries is important to reduce disruption of your training schedule.

Types of Dance Injuries

1. Foot and Ankle



Achilles Tendinitis:
Overuse of your Achilles may result in a degenerative condition of the Achilles tendon.

This can result in inflammation and pain.

Main causes of this condition are excessive training, calf tightness and calf weakness.

Posterior Ankle Impingement:

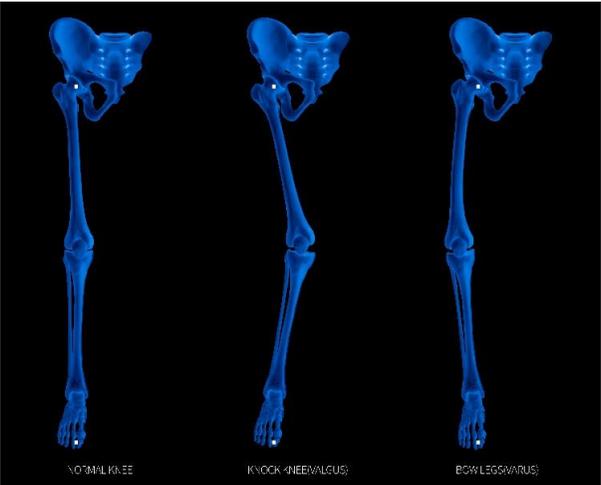
Jumps, Rlevé/Pointé work and full plantar flexion of the ankle may cause impingement at the back of your ankle.



2. Knee

Pain is most commonly experienced in the front of your affected knee. Dance movements that require deep lunges, knee bending and jumps will stress this part of the joint, resulting in pain.

Excess joint mobility and lack of control of knee alignment creates uneven distribution of stress in the kneecap. Forcing turn-out may also result in malalignment.



Normal, Valgus and Varus Alignment of the Knee

When dancers hyper-extend their knees beyond the normal 180 degrees, there is a chance of injury as well, though less common.

When this happens repeatedly or forcefully, the recurrent pinching and pain of the fat pad in the front of the knee will occur.



Hyper Extension of the Knees Increases the Risk of Fat Pad Impingement

3. Back

As dancers, you are also at risk of back pain. The sources of back pain are varied and can come from the muscles, ligaments, joints, inter-vertebral disc injuries etc. You may also develop pain from stress fractures due to repeated hyper-extension movements (arching backwards).



Spondylolysis, a Cause of Back pain in Dancers