

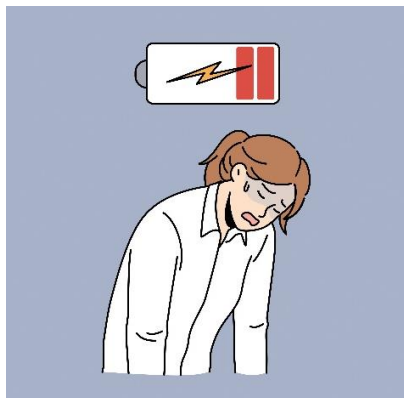
# DANCER HEALTH TIPS FROM UAB SPORTS & EXERCISE MEDICINE

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## What is RED-S and Why Should Dancers Be Aware of This?

**Dr. Dale Colorado, Medical Director, Sports and Musculoskeletal Medicine**

Relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S) affects active people. It is caused by an energy imbalance, when more calories are burned than taken in which results in low energy availability. The demanding schedule and physical loads associated with dance can put dancers at risk of developing RED-S. Activities that emphasize leanness or focus on a certain body image can also increase risk. One research study found that 57% of female dancers and 29% of male dancers were at risk of RED-S. In addition, only 29% of dancers were aware of RED-S.



RED-S can negatively affect your health in many ways. It can impair bone health, can cause irregular menstrual cycles, can impact your heart and digestive function, can weaken your immune system, and can affect your mental health. This can also increase your risk for various musculoskeletal injuries, such as stress fractures.

Symptoms of RED-S may be very subtle, such as feeling fatigued, experiencing increased anxiety or depression, or having an injury that just won't get better. On the other hand, RED-S may also present as something more serious, like a stress fracture.

Risk of RED-S can be reduced by ensuring adequate rest and nutrition. Awareness and education are key. However, more specialized treatment may be needed. **If you are experiencing RED-S symptoms, make an appointment with the UAB Sports & Exercise Medicine clinic today, and we can provide you with a nutrition consultation.**

Is there a dancer health related topic you want to learn more about? Or maybe you have a specific question? Send those to us via email ([rachel@alabamadancecouncil.org](mailto:rachel@alabamadancecouncil.org)) and we will try to answer them in future articles.

## About the Author:



**Dale Colorado, DO, MPH** is an Associate Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at UAB. He serves as Medical Director of Sports and Musculoskeletal Medicine, as well as Medical Director of Performing Arts Medicine. He is board certified in both Sports Medicine and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Dr. Colorado has lectured nationally and authored multiple articles and textbook chapters on musculoskeletal issues related to performing arts medicine and sports medicine. He is a member of the Performing Arts Medicine Association and International Association for Dance Medicine and Science.

For an appointment with Dr. Colorado or anyone on the UAB Sports and Exercise Medicine team, please call us at **205-930-8339** or visit us online at [uabmedicine.org/sports](http://uabmedicine.org/sports).

## References:

- 1 Mountjoy M, Ackerman KE, Bailey DM, et al. 2023 International Olympic Committee's (IOC) consensus statement on Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (REDs). *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2023;57:1073-1098.
- 2 Keay N, Overseas A, Francis G. Indicators and correlates of low energy availability in male and female dancers. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* 2020;6:e000906.
- 3 Allen N, Kelly S, Lanfear M, et al. Relative energy deficiency in dance (RED-D): a consensus method approach to REDs in dance. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* 2024;10:e001858.