

DANCER HEALTH TIPS FROM UAB SPORTS & EXERCISE MEDICINE

Cross-Training for Dancers

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Why should I do additional exercises when I'm already so physically active with dancing? This is a common question from dancers when the suggestion of cross-training is discussed. Dancing is undoubtedly very physically demanding and a great form of exercise in and of itself. However, dancing may not strengthen all muscle groups or provide the amount of cardiovascular exercise or flexibility/stability exercise that is needed for overall fitness and injury prevention.



Cross-training combines different types of exercise activities to vary your fitness program. This variety of exercises is important to decrease your risk of sustaining an injury from overuse since you are not using the same muscles in the same way all the time. It allows you to work muscles all over your body.

An ideal cross training routine incorporates 1) cardiovascular exercise, like running, cycling or swimming, 2) strength training, and 3) flexibility/stability exercises, like yoga or Pilates. Cross-training does not need to be lengthy, especially if you are already dancing 5 or more days per week. Add activities slowly and gradually increase the duration and intensity, and as we discussed in our [March 2024 Dancer Health Tips](#), don't forget about the importance of rest and recovery.

Cross-training not only reduces the risk of injury, it can also improve performance. It can allow your muscles to adapt more easily to new activities or increased physical activities. It can also be a fun way to try new sports or other activities.

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) and we will try to answer them in future articles.

About the Author:



Dale Colorado, DO, MPH is an Assistant Dean at the UAB Heersink School of Medicine. He is an Associate Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at UAB. He serves as Chief 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 written 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.

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