

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

ANATOMY + INJURY PREVENTION
FOR THE INDUSTRY DANCER

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AGENDA



- Anatomy basics: Ligaments / Tendons/ Hypermobility
- Common injuries in dance
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 - Prevention strategies
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- Tips for sustainable longevity in a professional career

KEY ANATOMICAL STRUCTURES

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Why anatomy matters for dancers:

Understanding your body = power, control, and protection

Ligaments

Connect **bone to bone**

Provide **joint stability**

Limited elasticity: they don't "bounce back" like muscles

If overstretched (e.g., via hypermobility), they don't return to original length → instability

Injuries: Sprains (esp. ankle), ligament tears

Tendons

Connect **muscle to bone**

Transmit the force of muscle contraction to move joints

Injuries: Tendinopathy, tendinitis (e.g., Achilles tendon in ballet dancers)



HYPERMOBILITY IN DANCERS

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What is hypermobility?

- Excessive range of motion in joints - Sometimes beneficial in dance aesthetically
- Often seen in dancers naturally or encouraged through training

Pros:

- Beautiful lines, extension, turnout

Risks:

- Joint instability
- Higher injury risk (especially sprains, dislocations)
- Fatigue due to muscles working overtime to stabilize joints

Red flags to watch for:

Chronic pain

Joint “clicking,” locking, or giving way

Repeated sprains, especially at same joint

Management:

Strength training → **Muscle compensation for ligament laxity**

Proprioception work (balance, body awareness)

Avoid overstretching passive flexibility

Focus on active range of motion

HYPERMOBILITY IN THE STUDIO:



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COMMON DANCE INJURIES

- Ankle sprains (ligament) “rolling over ankle” “sickling the foot”
- Tendinopathy (esp. Achilles, patellar) “short Achilles”
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- Knee instability “swaybacks” “hyperextended knees”
- Hip impingement from poor alignment in turnout “180 degree turnout” “flat turnout”
- Stress fractures (due to compensation or misalignment) “gripping” “popping the hip”

INJURY PREVENTION

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1. Strength & Conditioning - Especially around joints - Focus on glutes, hamstrings, calves, deep core. Use your muscles instead of relying on your facility + joints.

2. Alignment & Technique - Importance of proper turnout from the hips - Don't force ranges — control over extreme motion.

3. Warm-Up & Cool-Down - Dynamic warm-up (not static stretching) - Cool-down with mobility and light stretching. Build strength within your full range of motion.

4. Cross-Training - Pilates, resistance training, swimming — build resilience. Therabands to build your strength ankles, knees, and hips etc.

5. Recovery - Adequate rest and sleep - Periodised training — avoiding overuse.

When you are INJURED you need to RECOVER fully!



SUMMARY

- Hypermobility can be a strength if managed properly
- Ligaments and tendons are your body's support system – protect them
- Prioritise strength, control, and awareness over extremes
- Injury prevention isn't just about avoiding pain – it's about **career longevity**

THANK YOU

PRESENTATION TITLE



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1. How do you think your own anatomy (like flexibility or joint stability) affects the way you dance?
2. What habits do you have — or want to develop — to help prevent injury in your training?
3. Have you ever felt pressure to push your body beyond what feels safe? What did you learn from that experience?

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