

-Yoga Routine for Dancers-

This Yoga routine is for dancers and it has two main goals:

1. Increase flexibility
2. Strengthen to prevent injury

Providing your body with a balance of stretching and strengthening your muscles is key to injury prevention.

1. Pigeon Pose-

Pigeon Pose will increase your hip flexibility and quad flexibility.

Becoming more flexible in these areas will help you better execute dance movements such as leg extensions and full splits.

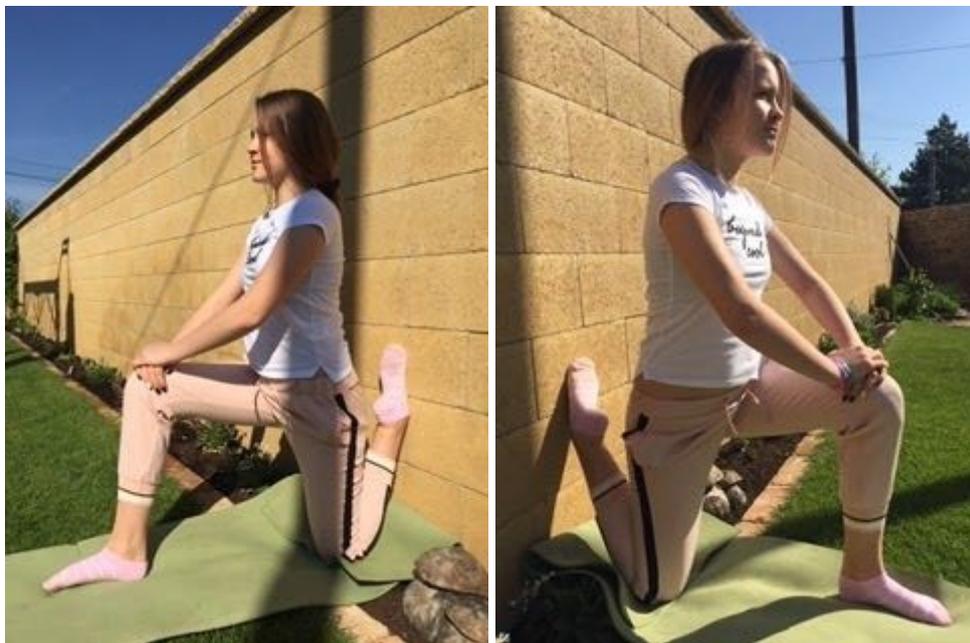


Let's try it:

- Begin in a Low Lunge and then release the outer edge of your front leg onto the mat
- Either bring your shin parallel to the front of the mat for a deeper stretch or bring your front heel in closer toward your hips for a more gentle stretch
- Reach your back leg straight behind you
- Remain here for several deep breaths as you allow your hips to gently sink toward the mat
- For an added stretch in your lower back, glutes, and hamstrings, you can hinge forward and rest your forearms or torso on the mat. Use props underneath your hips or torso as needed
- Repeat on the other side

2. King Arthur pose-

King Arthur is an extremely intense quad and hip stretch, and it feels so good! This one will help you achieve deeper backbends and higher extensions of your leg toward the back body in dance moves like an arabesque (arabesque is a ballet pose).



Let's try it:

- Come to a wall and face your body away from it. You may want to place a folded blanket or thicker yoga mat next to the wall to provide extra cushioning for your knee to rest on so it doesn't hurt.
- Place the top of your foot on the wall behind you and then bend your knee and place that knee on the ground
- Bring your shin and the top of your foot flat on the wall
- Facing away from the wall, place your hands on the ground and step your opposite leg forward, planting that foot on the floor
- Bring your back shin against the wall and draw your front leg into a Low Lunge position
- Stay here for several deep breaths, and then repeat on the other side

3. Reclining Hand-to-Big Toe Pose-

Reclining Hand-to-Big Toe Pose, is an excellent hamstring stretch to do after a dance class. This yoga pose stretches your hamstrings and glutes, and it will help you achieve higher extensions in the front and sides of your body (for example in développ   to the front or side or grand jet   in ballet).



Let's try it:

- Lay on your back and raise one leg into the air while keeping the other leg flat on the floor
- Straighten both legs and flex your toes toward your face to keep the legs engaged
- Bring your fingers to your big toe (same hand to same foot). You can also choose to hold the entire foot in both hands or hold onto the calf
- Hold this stretch for several deep breaths and then repeat on the other side

4. Locust Pose-

Locust Pose, is an excellent pose for strengthening the muscles in the back body. If a dancer who has extreme flexibility in her hamstrings strengthening the glutes and hamstring muscles is key for preventing injury in this area.



Let's try it:

- Come onto your stomach and rest your forehead on the mat
- Relax your arms down by your sides
- On an inhale, lift your head, arms, legs, and feet off the ground
- Energetically reach your hands back toward your feet and stretch your feet toward the back of the mat
- Hold for several deep breaths and release everything back down. Repeat three to four times

5. Boat Pose-

Boat Pose, strengthens the abdominals and hip flexors. It's a great pose to do if you are a dancer who has extreme flexibility in your hips and also in your spine. If your back muscles are weak, strengthening the abdominals is an excellent way to help prevent injury.



Let's try it:

- Sit on the ground and squeeze your inner knees and ankles together as you bend your knees and lift your feet
- Engage your core and lift your heart to prevent rounding your spine
- If your hip flexors feel cramped, or if your abdominals need to build a bit a more strength, stay here. If you're ready to increase the challenge, straighten your legs and lift your arms overhead
- Hold this pose for several deep breaths and repeat

6. Half Moon pose-

Half Moon Pose, helps improve balance, leg extension, and oblique strength. This is an excellent yoga pose for dancers who need to work on keeping parallel legs.



Let's try it:

- Start from a Low Lunge position with your right foot forward
- Lift your back left leg and straighten your front knee
- Work to stack your left hip on top of your right
- Plant your right hand on a block or the mat and reach the opposite arm up toward the ceiling
- Hold for several deep breaths and repeat on the opposite side

7. Dolphin Pose:

This pose is so good for developing upper body strength. Having a strong chest and back will ensure that you can hold your upper body and arms in perfect positions.

This pose is especially good for all ballet dancers, as it will build all those smaller supporting muscles that hold your arms in position for long periods of time, as is often required.



Let's try it:

- Begin on your hands and knees. Align your wrists directly under your shoulders, and your knees directly under your hips. The fold of your wrists should be parallel to the top edge of your mat, and your middle fingers should point directly forward.
- Lower your elbows to the floor directly beneath your shoulders. Keep your forearms parallel to each other and to the side edges of your mat. Distribute your weight evenly across both forearms.
- Tuck your toes and lift your knees off the floor. Keep your knees bent as you lengthen your spine and broaden across your shoulder blades.
- Do not walk your feet closer to your hands — keep the extension of your whole body. If your upper back begins to round, bend your knees again until your spine is straight.
- Draw your shoulder blades into your upper back ribs and toward your tailbone.
- Align your ears with your upper arms. Relax your head, but do not let it dangle. Gaze between your legs or toward your navel.
- Hold for 5-25 breaths.
- To release, exhale as you gently bend your knees and come back to the floor.

8. Bridge Pose:

For precision Bridge Pose is a must, opening the chest, strengthening the legs and glutes and improving balance.



Let's try it:

- Lying face up with your knees bent, draw your feet in as close to the glutes as possible, being sure to keep your feet hip width apart.
- Pressing your feet into the floor, lift through the pelvis, raising the hips from the floor into a bridge position, keeping your arms next to the body.
- With your thighs parallel and your knees directly over your feet, roll the tops of the hips towards your navel and firm through the glutes.

From here, interlace your fingers behind your back and lift through the chest so you are resting on the tops of the shoulders. Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

9. **Dancer's Pose-**

Dancer's Pose is the perfect must-practice pose that opens the hips, improves balance and flexibility and increases back strength.



Let's try it:

- **Standing straight with feet hip width apart, shift your weight onto your left foot and bending the right knee, lift your right foot back towards your buttocks.**
- **Reach back with your right hand and clasp the inner sole of the right foot.**
- **Keeping your left leg strong, lift your right foot up and away from your torso, extending the thigh behind you until it is parallel with the floor.**
- **At the same time, lean forward from the hips, extending the left arm out and upwards, looking forward to keep your balance.**

Hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

10. Chair Pose-

This pose is great for strengthening a dancer's lower back and core, which is beneficial to all dance styles. It helps add strength to thighs, legs, and knee muscles, and it stretches the spine. This is a great pose for dancers who need to improve their balance and endurance in order to perform high leaps or dance across long distances.



Let's try it:

- Exhale and bend your knees, trying to take the thighs as nearly parallel to the floor as possible. The knees will project out over the feet, and the torso will lean slightly forward over the thighs until the front torso forms approximately a right angle with the tops of the thighs.
- Keep the inner thighs parallel to each other and press the heads of the thigh bones down toward the heels.
- Firm your shoulder blades against the back. Take your tailbone down toward the floor and in toward your pubis to keep the lower back long.
- Stay for 30 seconds to a minute. To come out of this pose straighten your knees with an inhalation, lifting strongly through the arms.

11. **Tree Pose-**

Tree Pose is ideal for improving your focus and balance, while strengthening the ankles, knees and legs.



Let's try it:

- Standing straight with your feet hip width apart, shift your weight onto your left foot, keeping the inner sole of the foot in contact with the floor. Turn your right leg outwards from the hip, bending your right knee and lifting the foot up, using your right hand to grab the right ankle.
- Place the sole of the right foot against the inner thigh of your left leg, ensuring the toes are pointing to the floor.
- Bring your palms together in prayer and either keep them centred in front of your chest or raise them above your head.
- Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Repeat on the other side.

Key points:

Keep your hips straight and your weight directly over the left foot throughout the pose, being sure to tuck your tailbone under. Use the left leg to resist the right foot as you press into the thigh, bringing the right foot as high as is comfortable. Shoulder blades need to be kept back and down and the left leg strong.

12. Cobra Pose-

Cobra Pose opens the chest, improving flexibility and strength in the spine and buttocks.



Let's try it:

- Lie face down on your stomach with your palms underneath your shoulders and
- the elbows bent.
- Keeping your legs together and the tops of the feet touching the floor, engage your
- thighs and lift your chest from the floor, extending the arms as you go.
- Be sure to keep the neck in line with the spine and your head squared over the shoulders as you lift your chest, stopping where you feel comfortable.
- Hold for 30 to 45 seconds.

Key points:

Keep the elbows tucked in next to the body throughout the pose, keeping the hip bones pressing down into the floor. Pull the shoulder blades back and down and lift through the top of the sternum (try not to push the ribs forward!). Keep the core engaged and your tailbone tucked under the whole time.

13. Legs-Up-The-Wall

This pose will also help you wind down after high-intensity practices or performances, calming your nervous system and drawing you back to your center.



Let's try it:

- Begin the pose by sitting with your left side against the wall. Your lower back should rest against the bolster, if you're using one.
- Gently turn your body to the left and bring your legs up onto the wall. If you are using a bolster, shift your lower back onto the bolster before bringing your legs up the wall. Use your hands for balance as you shift your weight.
- Lower your back to the floor and lie down. Rest your shoulders and head on the floor.
- Shift your weight from side-to-side and scoot your buttocks close to the wall. Let your arms rest open at your sides, palms facing up. If you're using a bolster, your lower back should now be fully supported by it.
- Close your eyes. Hold for 5-10 minutes, breathing.
- To release, slowly push yourself away from the wall and slide your legs down to the right side. Use your hands to help press yourself back up into a seated position.

14. Hand To-Big-Toe Pose-

This pose will help you develop the strength and balance you need to support your weight on one leg, and will help you develop keen awareness of what your extended leg is doing.



Let's try it:

- Reach your left arm inside the thigh, cross it over the front ankle, and hold the outside of your left foot. If your hamstrings are tight, hold a strap looped around the left sole.
- Firm the front thigh muscles of the standing leg, and press the outer thigh inward.
- Inhale and extend the left leg forward. Straighten the knee as much as possible. If you're steady, swing the leg out to the side. Breathe steadily; breathing takes concentration, but it helps you balance.
- Hold for 30 seconds, then swing the leg back to center with an inhale, and lower the foot to the floor with an exhale. Repeat on the other side for the same length of time.

15. Upward Plank Pose-

This pose is great for strengthening the upper body. It is great for dancers who frequently use their wrists, arms, shoulders, and back.



Let's try it:

- With your hands several inches behind your hips and your fingers pointing forward. Bend your knees and place your feet on the floor, big toes turned inward, heels at least a foot away from your buttocks.
- Exhale, press your inner feet and hands down against the floor, and lift your hips until you come into a reverse tabletop position, torso and thighs approximately parallel to the floor, shins and arms approximately perpendicular.
- Without losing the height of your hips, straighten your legs one at a time. Lift your hips still higher without hardening your buttocks.
- Press your shoulder blades against your back torso to support the lift of your chest.
- Without compressing the back of your neck, slowly drop your head back.
- Hold for 30 seconds, then sit back down and exhale.