

NATYA

M A G A Z I N E
Oct 2021 VOLUME 005



GOOD POSTURE

Dr. Divya Raghavan from
the editor's desk

ARTIST IN FOCUS

Aishwarya Venkat

FEATURED

**Indraadhanush-
Center for Excellence**

Patient Spotlight

Prachi Laud

RIGHT STACK PHYSICAL THERAPY



Hello readers, I am Dr Divya Raghavan I am a doctor of physical therapy with Board certification in orthopedics I am a trained Bharatnatyam dancer, a Bollywood dance performer and a Kathak student I was a physical therapist at the Google wellness centers for several years before deciding to start my own practice-Right Stack Physical therapy (RSPT) in Sunnyvale CA I am passionate about injury prevention and do frequent community engagements on this topic My niche is corporate wellness and performing arts Natya Physical Therapy & Wellness is a sister company to RSPT Having had my share of dance related injuries, I created the Natya Magazine to promote self-care and injury awareness in dancers If you are a dancer and in pain, I would urge you to reach out to me at divya@natyapt.com

Posture

From the editor's desk

Dr. Divya Raghavan, PT, DPT, OCS

In these times of dealing with the Covid pandemic, there is another pandemic that we have turned a blind eye towards- the WFH pandemic. Working From Home (WFH) has become the new norm, and although it has its benefits and I am glad that people are being given this option, WFH comes with its own set of issues. WFH has led to poor work-life balance as the boundaries between work & play are muddled. In addition, poor ergonomics and incorrect postures has caused an increase in neck and back pain. Sedentary lifestyle, long work hours as well as improper desk set up are key factors here.

The popular methods of dealing with such muscle aches have been hot pack use, icing, resting, stretching, and massage. Although these modalities can provide relief, this relief is usually temporary because the cause of discomfort is not being addressed. What needs to be corrected is the posture & ergonomics. Ergonomics is the external environment-desk, chair, monitor, mouse, keyboard. Posture is the internal environment-spinal curves, core stability, tissue tension, joint mobility, muscle flexibility.

What is proper posture? I define a proper posture as a posture in which your spine is aligned to help keep your muscles in a resting but efficient state. Now, this posture can be different for different individuals based on their spinal alignment and structure. Both posture and ergonomics must go hand in hand to see a real difference in bodily strains. For a dancer who spends a lot of time working on the computer, focusing on proper posture maintenance is especially important. One cannot expect the body to magically align when the time comes to transition from work to dance. There needs to be concerted effort put into setting up the work desk & chair, along with doing postural stretches multiple times per day.

Here are some key tips & tricks that I recommend everyone who is working from home to follow...



Ergonomics Set up

1. Standing Desk: Take standing breaks after every 30 mins of sitting
2. Supportive chair: Lumbar support, mid back/shoulder blade support and chin tuck. Hip/knee/ankle at 90 degrees
3. Do not use arm rests
4. Elbows at 90 degrees with arms hanging loose by the side of the body when typing
5. Do not use wrist support when typing (Type as if playing a piano)
6. Keep wrists in a neutral- no extension or bending
7. Keep mouse close to keyboard to avoid reaching
8. Top of monitor at eye level
9. Monitor is arm length distance away from face

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10. Follow 20-20-20 rule to reduce eye strain (Look at an object 20 feet away every 20 mins of screen viewing for 20 secs)

Posture Cheat Sheet

1. Keep chin tucked
2. Keep shoulder blades slightly squeezed
3. Keep abdominals slightly engaged
4. Perform neck stretches every 2 hours
5. Perform hip and thigh stretches every three hours
6. Take walking breaks 1-2 times a day







DANCER EVALUATION



- Are you a dancer in pain?
- Do you have an old injury that never truly healed?
- Do certain moves make you fearful of hurting yourself?

**IT'S TIME
TO FIND
THE ROOT
CAUSE OF
YOUR
SYMPTOMS**



**DANCER
EVALUATION
INCLUDES**

- posture & form
- joint mobility
- muscle strength
- speed, agility & balance

www.natyapt.com



Aishwarya Venkat

I am a dancer, marketeer, teacher, and community helper. At the core of it all, I am a passionate communicator. I enjoy talking and learning from all ages/levels of people both personally and professionally. I come from a family that is crazy healthy and have travelled and lived in more than 5 states in India. Growing up I wanted to be a doctor and chose to pursue a career in Biology, but as they say 80% don't really end up pursuing their childhood dream, I jumped into the Management career and started working in a pharma company. Soon, I migrated to the golden state and have been working in the tech space as a Marketeer, while pursuing an art that is fuelled only by passion.

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Nascent stage:

The number of shifts during my school days made me a quiet and introverted person. My self-esteem was quite low during most of high school and when I look back that is where the early stages of improper posture started to kick in. Slouching and hugging arms across were my standard postures. During these changes the only thing that was my constant and became my safe haven was dance! The art form through which I learnt more about life and how to deal with the ever changing nature of things around me. I started learning music and dance at the age of 6 in Chennai. Learning the art form under a very traditional teacher; honor and trust were two lessons that I became a part of my DNA very early on. I completed my arangetram in 1999 and very quickly was performing on most of the famous platforms in Chen-

nai. Dance had become akin to my second home since I would spend most of my after school hours in practice at my teachers place. Winning scholarships, performing in tours was a wonderful experience to soak the older generations' passion for art and artistry. Sitting with accompanying artists during train rides and talking about various maestros in the field, humbling myself in front of the lineage of performing artists by performing to experience this energy will always be etched in my memory.

Eureka !!! moment

I mentioned learning under the traditional style with my teacher, an excellent nattuvanar and singer, who also followed the old school of sitting and teaching. While this was excellent because it enhanced my ability to bring what my body could showcase and not copy-cat my teacher, it also brought to light the lack of structured teaching during my formative years of learning dance. You see, when we learnt dance, we would just go in and start our class without a proper warm up or cool down or even posture correction. Corrections would be made if hands were obviously tilted / lifted or if aramandi was not held. But mostly it was a learn-as-you-go model and it is one of the primary reasons I am adaptive and open to learning from everything around me. Then I had the opportunity to join an intensive course(BFA) in dance that changed how I looked at dance . I moved from fluid, unstructured teaching to a rigorous and structured Kalakshetra style of teaching. The course opened the window to some rigorous exercises that were mandatory before and after dancing as observed from western dances. This was the first time I became consciously aware of lines, body alignments and the constructs of a good posture. So I took those lessons with me and adjusted my dance to ensure I was doing the right thing with my body.

And then there were three..

But as they say "Change begins at the end of

your comfort zone”..and so when I had my first baby, I lost sight of a lot of things that were pertaining to my body. I had a premature delivery with a C-section and was living in a new country with not much family to help me while I was unconsciously suffering from underlying depression and postpartum stress. My focus had turned completely to my child versus taking care of myself and my body. 2 year later when I started to see things in a better light, I jumped straight into dance to rescue myself. I didn't give my body the prep it needed before dancing and after, because I was working very hard to keep my “mom-guilt” at bay. I began to perform with a new found passion that kept my mind alive with the joy collaborating gave me. With a full time job, toddler duties and opportunities to prove myself as a dancer, I lost the discipline to focus on my body and relied on my dance practices as a form of workout.

An object in motion stays in motion until the ball comes rolling down!

As young dancers we tend to take our body for granted. We try to aspire for things thinking our body can handle the trauma without realizing it could have a long term impact. So if it meant doing fast or quick movements in dance or lifting kids/ tons of grocery bags to show resilience and strength, it was mostly done without the knowledge of what the physical training was needed for it and what could be a consequence. So any pain or pull, I kept brushing it aside as a temporary issue without actually fixing the problem. I also compromised on my lower back pain by wearing hip belts for longer than needed which did compromise my core.

Never had I ever thought , my body would succumb to the pressure I was putting it through and things would come to a rude halt. With the uncertainties of the pandemic which made us work from home, my stress/ sleep levels elevated my improper

posture causing neurological issues that made me minimize any physical activity for almost a year . Slowly all the minor pains that had existed started to show their teeth until I was throbbing with pain, unable to even walk or climb stairs. My worst nightmare of not being able to dance was coming true and I had to seek help.

Never have I ever ... been to a Physical Therapist!

I reached out to Dr.Divya during early Jan after watching her on a web session where she introduced herself as a PT who knows how to treat dancers. When I came in for my assessment Dr.Divya isolated my pain issues as bilateral knee cartilage degeneration which meant there was nothing much structurally I could do other than strengthening my knee muscles . It was a huge revelation that I was involuntarily using the wrong muscles due to incorrect posture and core weakness. As we started working on strengthening my core and working on my quads to correct the neuromuscular memory, simple exercises made me realize the muscle groups that were unused. A secondary issue of the auto-correct mode was putting pressure on the right hip to compensate for my left knee which was causing hip bursitis / tendonitis, another setback which made us pause and continue working on core strengthening until the inflammation went down.

One of the biggest learning I have had with Divya is to trust your body and be patient with it. As dancers we are eager to get back into the “groove”, so by week 3, I decided to overwork my exercises routine in order to progress faster which made things worse. So we went back to the basics and I started from the beginning to undo the trauma and rework on each rewiring my muscular exercises. Everyday I would continue rolling and strengthening and believing that these small wins would be worth it in the long run. After 5 months of patiently working,

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I was able to improve my strength and perform a thillana (a fast piece) with very little knee pain and understand which positions affect me the most. Today with constant conditioning and isolation I am able to physically be pain free while doing all activities other than dancing. But that does not stop me from dancing ,I do ensure I spare an hour and after to follow all the protocols of warm up and cool down in between my dance. My bffs are my foam rollers, peanut balls, and hand rollers and of course my PT.

Pearls of wisdom:

“It’s not the load that breaks you, it’s how you carry it!”

Chronic body pain primarily stems from:

- Prolonged sitting/ sleeping in an improper posture on desk/ bed
- Lack of targeted physical activity
- Improper Warm up or cool down
- Lack of good sleep, bed / mattress
- Depression/ Anxiety/ Stress

Good prevention is better than bad posture:

- Ensure a good ergonomic sitting position. No beds/ sofa while working, use a standing desk 50% of the day.
- Strengthen glutes, pelvic, quad and core every single day as per PT’s recommendation
- Roll, roll, rolling...
- Core ! Core ! Core !
- No slouching !
- Refrain from using belts/ fat suction materials to do the work your muscles need to.
- Stay positive and patient.
- Monitor knees and hip tilt position every time while sitting in araimandi
- Maintain regular sleep pattern
- Go slow , the world was not made in a day!

Having a good posture while doing anything is key for your physical and mental well being. It allows you to be more confident and reflects a calm, controlled state of mind.

As a dancer, it is imperative to have a good posture because we are activating very diametric groups of muscles, putting a lot of strain on our lower back and shoulders. Rushing can cause injury and distress to other parts in the body, shortening the span of your artistic journey.

I also realize the value of having someone on your side for injury recovery. Many times we ignore it because we believe it would not affect us or even if it did we would know how to handle it, but I am here to break the stereotype on that. We may have all the tools in our head and the knowledge of what works best for us ,but sometimes it takes the right guidance to implement it.

And it also takes that little external voice to motivate you when the going gets tough.

Thank you Dr.Divya for never once saying I cannot dance but for showing me that everything needs to be seen with a fresh perspective, most importantly your body!



Watch Aishwarya’s dance video 5 months after injury rehab here.

*Check out Aishwarya’s work:
[Aishwarya Venkat – Youtube channel](#)
[Aishwarya Venkat – Facebook page](#)*



Patient in Spotlight

Prachi



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I'm a Kathak and Bollywood dancer in the Bay Area, and for several months I'd been experiencing recurring lower back and knee pain, but didn't have a means of alleviating the pain or of preventing further injury. I would be in discomfort when I was dancing and often even when doing normal activities. I started seeing Dr. Divya to find ways to reduce my pain so I could resume dancing and high-impact activities, as well as to learn preventative strategies to avoid further injury. In the few weeks I've been working with Dr. Divya I've already seen improvement in my knee and back pain and have learned strategies to reduce my pain. She pointed out issues I had never realized before and gave me PT exercises to improve overall strength and stability for my long term health as a dancer. I've had such a wonderful experience with her!

”

GET YOUR ERGONOMICS ASSESSMENT DONE NOW



DESK/POSTURE ASSESSMENT



• **CAUSES**
• **RISKS**



• **PAIN ASSESSMENT**
• **STRETCHING**
• **MOBILIZING**

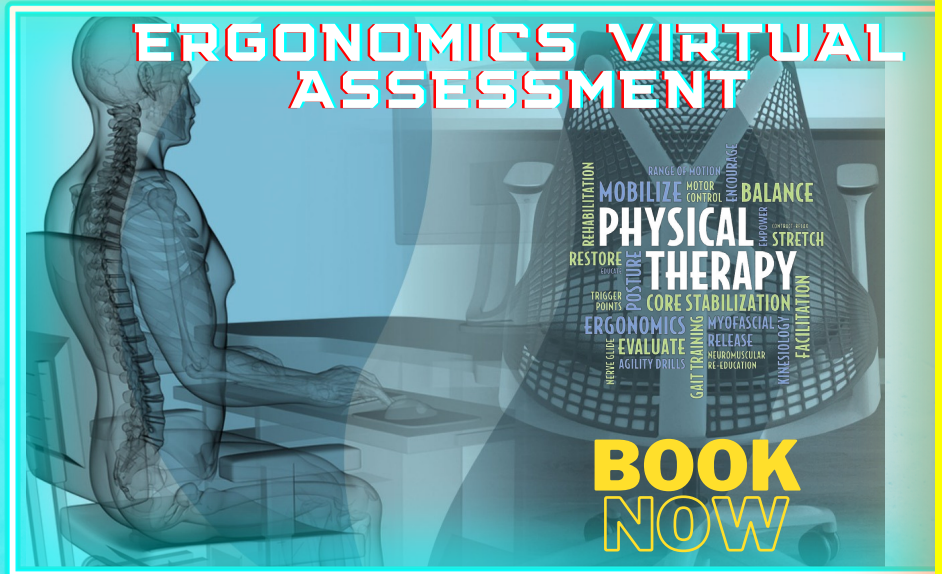


• **GOALS**
• **SUGGESTIONS**
• **STRATEGIES**



<https://app.elationemr.com/book/rightstackpt/ergonomics-assessment>

[HTTPS://MAILCHI.MP/RIGHTSTACKPT/ERGONOMICS-VIRTUAL-ASSESSMENT](https://mailchi.mp/rightstackpt/ergonomics-virtual-assessment)



NATYA REHAB & WELLNESS IS NOW TRADEMARKED!!!

Our proprietary process of providing injury prevention education, group rehab sessions as well as 1-1 assessment & treatment to injured dancers is now trademarked.

Reach out to our team at NatyaPT to enroll in this comprehensive one-of-a-kind program.

Email us at shay@rightstackpt.com

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Indraadhanush- Center for Excellence

Bidisha Mohanty

Founder & Artistic Director

Indraadhanush- Center for Excellence is a premier institution which specializes in Odissi Dance (an ancient Indian Classical dance form), Semi Classical dances and the Folk dances of India. The institute is being managed by Dr. Bidisha Mohanty, the Founder & Artistic Director of Indraadhanush and a classical dance enthusiast with over 15 years of experience in the Odissi dance form. The sole motive of Indraadhanush is to promote, preserve and popularize Odissi dance and music and various Indian art forms and pass it on to the next generation!

Bidisha is a disciple of Guru Sri Durga Charan Ranbir and belongs to the Guru Deba Prasad Das gharana. Guru Dr. Deba Prasad Das believed that Odissi is a dance form that has evolved from tribal, folk and classical culture. He had conceptualized Tridhara, which is quite vibrant in his style of dance. The prime objective of his life was to keep the traditional dance style unchanged based on its classical foundation. The emotional expression made with the traditional postures as brought about by him with his acting style and the beauty of Pallavi Dance had a lot of effect on the audience. For the first time his introduction of "Sabda Swarapata" in Odissi dance glorified him. The "Sabda", "Swara" and "Pata" is an integral part of the Deba Prasad Tradition, one which Indraadhanush strives to live by every single day.



Indraadhanush-Center for Excellence

Apart from Odissi, Indraadhanush also offers an assortment of semi-classical, bollywood and folk dances. We offer this variety to allow students to immerse themselves in different dance forms and experience the rich culture and heritage of India. Our goal is to provide quality dance instruction and foster inclusion, respect, self confidence and discipline through the joy of dance.

Indraadhanush offers various classes and prepares students for Odissi exams and Odissi Mancha Prabesh (Graduation/ Solo Debut). In terms of Odissi dance examinations, Indraadhanush takes pride in being a certified Pracheen Kala Kendra examination center. Formal examinations are an important part of Indraadhanush's dance curriculum. Exams not only showcase a

student's progress in learning Odissi, but they allow students to get a broader understanding of Odissi dance as a whole. Odissi dance incorporates both practical and theoretical aspects. Exams give students the opportunity to apply the concepts and techniques which they learn to both aspects of Odissi dance, and allow students to stay up to date in their dance training. At Indraadhanush we also help our students inculcate mental, physical & spiritual well-being. To foster mental well-being, we constantly support our students and motivate them to continue practicing and working hard. Through encouragement and enthusiasm, we instill a sense of respect and discipline in all of our students. Physically, Indraadhanush always promotes proper posture and practice when doing Odissi dance and other dance forms. Odissi has two main

bhangis (or postures): Chouka (Jagannath's sitting position or the Square-like stance) and Tribhangi (the three-bend position or a stance with a bend of head, knees and deflection of the torso). At the beginning of class, we always start with warm up exercises to ensure the body is ready for dancing; this includes numerous yoga postures and stretches as well. Proper body alignment and posture are essential to dancers as it makes them appear more elegant and confident. Also, it prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions and reduces fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently.

Spiritually, Indraadhanush emphasizes both the practical and theoretical aspects of Odissi dance. We always study the spirituality, stories, and meanings behind the dance items which we perform to understand the rich history and culture behind them. Additionally, at the beginning of every dance class, we always do pranam (or prayer) to Mother Earth for stamping on her (also known as the Bhumi Pranam). We also do Bhumi Pranam at the end of class to say sorry to Mother Earth for stamping on her while dancing.

Our Guru Dr. Bidisha Mohanty took utmost responsibility to keep her students motivated during the pandemic shutdown as well. During mid-March of 2020, Indraadhanush immediately transitioned to Zoom for conducting classes, practicing and preparing students for online dance exams and various virtual performances. Guru Bidisha also

kept encouraging her students to continue staying active, getting enough rest, and taking care of themselves. The students successfully shifted to the virtual learning environment and were extremely motivated to learn new choreographies, keep up with the practices and perform. Indraadhanush students perform internationally in events like Odissi International 2020 festival, Sivapadam International festival, was part of a huge production on unity with diversity, 'Mile Sur Mera Tumhara' which was featured in various news papers, social media and received awards at many Film festivals to name a few. In totality, Indraadhanush always looks to set a positive example and precedence for those around us! As always, "Life is better & happier when you Dance".



<https://youtu.be/JbrxjXaBV0k>



<https://youtu.be/tfeQsFI-Mzs>

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!



Watch Dr. Divya Raghavan show you how to heal your injuries from the comfort of your home

 **SUBSCRIBE** Right Stack Physical Therapy's YouTube Channel



Check out all our previous issues of Natya Magazine

A lot of dancers suffer from knee discomfort which worsens when they put repetitive strains like squatting, jumping & spinning. Knee pain can shorten a bright dancer's career and can dissuade student dancers from furthering their skills.



For dancers who would like to improve their knee health, NatyaPT has created the 'Healthy Knee Program'. This 4 weeks 240-hour group class will teach you all you need to know about preserving your knee joints.

Enroll at <https://natyapt.com/online-programs-courses>

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