

# Common Foot & Ankle Injuries Among Dancers



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# Why Dancer Have Injuries

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- Dancing is physically demanding on the feet & ankles
- Ballet positions place added stress



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# Types of Foot & Ankle Injuries

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- Ankle sprains
- Hallux limitus/hallux rigidus
- Metatarsalgia
- Overuse Injuries
- Fractures
- Ankle Impingement syndrome (anterior/posterior impingement syndrome)
- Flexor hallucis longus tenosynovitis
- Bunions



# What to Do

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- Some injuries require immediate medical attention
- Practice RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevation)
- Take an NSAID (such as ibuprofen)
- Always follow-up with a foot and ankle surgeon



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# Ankle Sprains

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- An injury to one or more ligaments
- Severity depends on
  - Number of ligaments involved
  - Whether stretched, partially torn, completely torn
- Symptoms
  - Pain or soreness
  - Swelling
  - Bruising
  - Difficulty walking
  - Stiffness in the joint



# Treatment for Ankle Sprains

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- Splinting or casting
- Rest, ice, compression
- NSAID (such as ibuprofen)
- Physical therapy
- More severe cases may require surgery



# Hallux Limitus/ Hallux Rigidus

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- A form of arthritis at the base of big toe
- Hallux limitus: toe has limited motion
- Hallux rigidus: toe is rigid (cannot move)



# Symptoms & Treatment of Hallux Limitus/Hallux

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## Rigidus

- Early in the condition
  - Pain & stiffness in big toe during use
  - Aggravated by cold, damp weather
  - Swelling & inflammation around the joint
- As the condition progresses
  - Pain even when at rest
  - Difficulty wearing shoes (due to bone spurs)
  - Dull pain in hip, knee, or lower back
- Treatment
  - Shoe modifications/orthotics
  - Sometimes surgery





# Metatarsalgia

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- Pain in the bottom of the foot
- Can be caused by
  - Sesamoiditis
  - Neuroma
  - Capsulitis of the metatarsal-phalangeal joint
  - Turf toe
  - Other conditions



# Symptoms & Treatment of Metatarsalgia

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- Sesamoiditis
  - Pain & swelling under the big toe joint
- Neuroma
  - Tingling, burning, numbness, pain, feels like something's in the ball of the foot
- Capsulitis of the metatarsal-phalangeal joint
  - Pain, swelling, can feel like a marble in your shoe
- Turf toe
  - Pain, swelling, limited joint movement
- Treatment depends on the condition
  - Nonsurgical & surgical options



# Overuse Injuries Seen in Dancers

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- Plantar fasciitis
- Achilles tendonitis
- Heel pain (not due to plantar fasciitis)
- Shin splint
- Peroneal tendonitis



# Symptoms & Treatments of Overuse Injuries

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- Plantar fasciitis
  - Pain in bottom of heel, often worst after rest
- Achilles tendonitis
  - Aching, stiffness, soreness or tenderness within the tendon
- Heel pain (non-plantar fasciitis)
  - Pain in bottom of heel
- Shin splint
  - Tenderness, soreness, or pain along side of the shinbone
- Peroneal tendonitis
  - Pain, swelling, warmth to the touch along the tendon
- Treatment depends on the condition
  - Nonsurgical and surgical options



# Fractures (Broken Bones) in Dancers

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- Acute fracture
  - One type is “dancer’s fracture” (fifth metatarsal bone)
  - Often due to landing incorrectly or ankle sprains
- Stress fracture
  - Hairline break
  - Caused by overactivity in dancers



# Symptoms & Treatment of Fractures

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- Symptoms

- Pain
- Swelling
- Possible bruising
- Walking can be difficult

- Treatment

- Protected weightbearing or complete offloading for a while
- Surgery is sometimes needed



# Symptoms & Treatment of Ankle Impingement

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- Pain (dull and achy or sharp)
- Swelling
- Sometimes bruising
- Treatment depends on the injury
  - Nonsurgical and surgical options



# Flexor Hallucis Longus (FHL) Tenosynovitis

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- Inflammation of the FHL tendon
- Symptoms
  - Pain in back of ankle
  - Pain when flexing or extending big toe
  - Swelling
- Treatment depends on severity of the condition
- Nonsurgical and surgical options





# Bunions in Dancers

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- Bunions can be exacerbated by
  - Tight-fitting shoes
  - Repetitive irritation to big toe joint
- Bunions are changes in the boney framework
  - Big toe leans toward second toe
  - Throws the bones out of alignment



# Symptoms & Treatment of Bunions

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- Misalignment (and “bump”) progresses
- Pain
- Sometimes redness and swelling
- Treatment is often shoe modification or surgery



# Take Good Care of Your Feet

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