

Common Foot & Ankle Injuries Among Dancers

Why Dancer Have Injuries

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

Types of Foot & Ankle Injuries

- 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

- 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

Ankle Sprains

- 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

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

Hallux Limitus/ Hallux Rigidus

- 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 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

- 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

- 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

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

Symptoms & Treatments of Overuse Injuries

- 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

- 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

- Symptoms
 - Pain
 - Swelling
 - Possible bruising
 - Walking can be difficult
- Treatment
 - Protected weightbearing or complete offloading for awhile
 - Surgery is sometimes needed

Symptoms & Treatment of Ankle Impingement

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

Flexor Hallucis Longus (FHL) Tenosynovitis

- 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

- 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

- 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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