

FACT CHECK!

Myths to resistance training.

Reina Teh, 12 May 2020

Myth 1: Resistance training results in muscle bulk thus affecting the dancer's physical aesthetic.

That is not the truth! Multiple studies have shown that a well designed resistance training programme is able to increase muscle strength without affecting the dancers aesthetic appearance¹⁰. In fact, resistance training can improve muscles ability to generate more force to enhance dancers performance^{6,7,11,13}.

Myth 2: Strength training will affect flexibility.

In the actual fact, strength and flexibility training complements each other to obtain optimal performance. These are proven to be positive in multiple studies^{2,10}.

To put theory into perspective, many a times dancers focus mainly on flexibility training and training on a regular basis will cause the connective tissue in the muscles to loosen and elongate^{2,11}. This results in damaged tissue due to over stretching or sudden powerful movement contraction which will increase the likelihood of injury.

However, injuries can be prevented by performing resistance training as it will strengthen the connective tissue. But remember, it is important to be moving through the full range of motion while performing these exercises¹¹.

Myth 3: Attending daily dance class is enough.

Research suggest that dance class and rehearsals equip dancers with the ability to perform technical skill but do not develop physical capability to cope with the demands of dance performances. This is due to the increasing physical demands placed on dancers. Hence, in the current dance environment both fitness and skill development becomes of utmost important⁸. Fitness here is defined as the ability to meet the demand of a specific physical task, including body composition, joint mobility and cardiorespiratory fitness^{5,10,15}.

However, it is understood that dancers, especially professional dancers, goes through several hours of dance training which will result in fatigue and lack of time for resistance training. Hence, it is important for dancers / dance companies to schedule a conditioning class or include it within the class/rehearsal time regardless of dance genres.

Myth 4: When dancers performs resistance training, they have to train within the dance movements vocabularies.

As strange as it sounds, when conducting resistance training for dancers, one does not need to load on the specific dance movements. Such loading may actually lead to detrimental effects such as injury or engagement of the wrong muscles resulting in zero improvements.

Alternatively, one should identify the muscle group use while performing a movement / consult a strength and conditioning coach to identify a more effective methodology to improve the particular movement.

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