

# WHY ALL DANCERS NEED BALLET



Even if you are planning to focus on Hip Hop, jazz or tap, ballet training is essential to being a good dancer – especially if you plan to go professional. It provides the technique you need to flourish in all other dance styles. Here are some reasons why it is important.

1) Ballet is the basic foundation for most forms of dance. Whatever you learn in ballet, it translates to values that can be used to pursue other forms of dance. The alignment and musicality it requires are only some examples of important qualities in most dance styles.

2) The development of discipline and dedication. Ballet technique is very specific and requires practice to improve. In most cases, the qualities of discipline and dedication translate themselves to other areas of life like work and school.

3) Improving posture. Let's face it: everything in ballet requires good posture. In time, the posture utilized in the studio translates to every part of a dancer's life.

4) Improving balance and flexibility. Two large parts of ballet technique which, consequently, diminish the likelihood of injury in ballet, sports, and other dance forms.

5) Increased agility. While often slow and graceful, ballet has its swift moments as well. Football players often attribute speed and agility to their experiences cross-training with ballet during the off season.

6) Aural, visual, and kinetic stimulus. In laymans' terms: You learn to connect verbal commands and musical cues with exercise demonstrations and perform them in our/your

body. Different parts of the brain are problem solving to perform the movements in time to the music.

7) Confidence. Have you ever seen a five-year-old coming out of ballet class? He/she is most likely smiling and will gladly show you what has been learned. The confidence that ballet instills is not exclusive to the five-year-old demographic. The artistry, musicality, and grace of ballet are great confidence boosters.

It's important to add at least one ballet class to your weekly schedule to start. Then, add more as your time and budget permits. Now, you may hate pulling on the leotard and tights, warming up at the barre and jumping and turning to classical music. But if you don't get the training now, you will have a lot of catching up to do if you want to work professionally.

A close friend of mine took ballet as a child but grew tired of it and decided to try jazz and tap instead. A few years later, she was surprised to see a student from her jazz class in a ballet performance. My friend told her how good she was and I told she said: "I don't like ballet at all, but it helps me in jazz." My friend returned to ballet and suck with it with success.

It can be extremely difficult to fix "bad habits" you create over the years by not learning proper dance technique, not to mention competing with other dancers who have been studying ballet at length. Ballet gives you the basic arm and leg movements you need in jazz, modern, tap, and ballroom. It helps you find your center of balance, gain strength and agility and move gracefully. And choreographers look for this technical capability.

If you don't have the technical training that comes from ballet, and your competition does, you will not get the dance job. Take a look at the ballet dancers who also study other forms of dance (example: the finalists on "So You Think You Can Dance").

While many of the ballerinas you see may be a little "stiff" in Hip Hop, they tend to have more control over their bodies in modern, jazz, ballroom, and other, dance styles. And they are almost always better turners.

Today's working dancers who are not specifically focused on being professional ballerinas still incorporate ballet into their regular, dance-training efforts... so whether you like it or not, ballet is an essential part of being a good, all-around dancer.

And if you have any interest in pursuing a dance career, please enroll in a ballet class as soon as possible. I promise all of your hard work will pay off. You'll be a better dancer and get more dance work in your future career.