

Dancers

Special Report:

**What 5 things
are you missing
in your dance
technique?**



About the Authors:

Noelle Dowma DPT, BFA, PMA-CPT

Educational Background: Noelle graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma and then received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She has been working in outpatient orthopedic settings since 2002. Since graduation, Noelle has pursued extensive continuing education through Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (has taken ALL of the offered courses), Kinetic control, Pilates based coursework, C1 and C2 BSPT Schroth certified, manual lymph drainage certified by Evergreen Certifications, Progressing Ballet Technique, and is Dry Needling Certified through Myopain seminars. Musculoskeletal injuries of the spine and all extremities are her main realm of experience. In addition, her areas of specialization include: osteopathic based manual therapy, Pilates based rehabilitation, dance medicine, craniosacral therapy, dry needling, manual lymph drainage, osteoporosis, hypermobility syndromes, and scoliosis. Noelle is the owner of Kinesphere Physical Therapy LLC.

Pilates: Noelle began studying Pilates when rehabilitating a dance injury in 1992. Since that time, she trained through the Physical Mind Institute, Polestar Pilates Education and is Nationally Pilates Certified. She is a Principal Educator for Polestar Pilates Education, where she teaches fitness and rehabilitation professionals how to use Pilates with their clients and patients. Having taught across the United States, Caribbean, and Mexico, Noelle is a regular presenter at courses and conferences. Pilates was a part of Noelle's life before becoming a Physical Therapist and it continues to be an essential part of her success with patients. Noelle developed the Pilates program at the Kansas City Ballet school. Noelle also teaches for Oov Education and is trained in the Konnector.

Dance Medicine: Noelle continues to dance today, but the professional training of her Bachelor of Fine Arts allows her the understanding of a dancer's career, body and injuries. The Miami City Ballet and Broadway shows were Noelle's past dance medicine experience before moving to Kansas City in 2006. Noelle teaches at local dance schools, including the Kansas City Ballet School and has been invited to teach at dance schools in the US and Mexico. As a sought after dance medicine physical therapist, Noelle works on touring Broadway shows coming through Kansas City and also served as the dance medicine specialist at Children's Mercy. She most recently presented in the 2017 International Association of Dance Medicine and Science conference. Additionally, she is certified in Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT).

Ashley Herrman, DPT

Educational Background: Ashley graduated with an Associate of Science as a Physical Therapist Assistant, and practiced for a few years while earning her Bachelor of Health Science from Washburn University, and then received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Kansas Medical Center. She has been practicing in outpatient orthopedics since 2003. Extensive continuing education has been pursued through North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy (NAIOMT), Kinetic Control, Polestar Pilates Education, Michigan State University's School of Osteopathic Medicine (craniosacral) and Schroth Barcelona Scoliosis Physical Therapy School (C1 and C2 certified). In her career she has provided individualized rehab for all types of musculoskeletal injuries of the spine and extremities, post-surgical rehab, sports medicine, and neurologic conditions. Thoroughly analyzing a patient's movement patterns and muscle imbalances are crucial to her practice, as extensive patient education so to ensure long term success.



Ashley Herrman, DPT Cont.

Pilates: Ashley did her rehabilitation specific Pilates training through Polestar Pilates Education in Kansas City, taught by Noelle. She completed her apprenticeship hours and successfully passed her graduation exam, allowing her to be an official Polestar Pilates Practitioner. Ashley also is trained in Oov and Konnect-or.

Sports Medicine: Ashley particularly enjoys working with athletes, as they prepare to return to sport after injury. As an athlete herself, Ashley understands the demands of sports and rehabilitates them using her extensive continuing education. This even extends to dance medicine, as she applies biomechanical principles to allow for restoration of dance technique.

Dance Medicine: Although Ashley is not a dancer, she is experienced with treating the needs of the dancer and has excellent success in her outcomes. She has taught performers from Broadway shows as well as local dance studios.



Dancers

“I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself.”

-Baryshnikov

Do you feel like you are dancing the best and strongest version of yourself?

5 tips that can help you dance better and prevent injuries:

1. Did you know your turnout muscles are different than your glute muscles?

Just “squeezing” your butt is not good enough no matter if you are turning out in ballet or dancing parallel in other styles. The deep hip rotators are **BELOW** your gluteus maximus and control the rotation of your hip, which controls the alignment of your knee. Your gluteus maximus is a hip extender and helps you with climbing stairs, walking, and doing anything to the back, but not turnout. Do you know the difference in how to contract them and use them in class?

2. Do you know how properly point your foot?

Pointing your foot should not include bending the distal joint of your big toe (the joint closest to your toe nail). You actually lose some pointing range of motion by doing this and also could be causing some of your toe/ankle tendons to become irritated. Flexor hallucis longus (FHL) tendonitis is a common dance injury that is not so common in the regular population. Point your foot so that the big toe is completely straight.



3. Are you stretching your nerves or your muscles?

Your brain and spinal cord have a covering that continues into your nerves, which ride alongside your muscles in your legs and arms. If you are holding a hamstring stretch with a rounded back and flexed foot, you are making your flexibility worse! Muscles like a prolonged stretch, nerves do not. When holding a stretch in this position, you should be moving either your head, or your foot (flex/pointe), about 50-100 times. By remembering your nerves are in your legs and arms as well, you will be able to further your flexibility. Dancers often don't know about their nerves driving their inflexibility and therefore are not reaching their full potential.

4. Do you do over splits?

Research is starting to show that the splits and center splits cause the hip sockets to subluxate. This means that your hips have to slightly dislocate in order to complete this maneuver. When you then go into the over splits position, you are pushing this subluxation even further. Most dancers are naturally hypermobile, which means their joints are too loose. When stretching the joints even further, this means that the joints can become unstable which leads to injury. It is better to stretch muscles and not joints and then work on strengthening yourself to be able to hold extreme positions of high extensions and leaps.



5. Do you have a dance medicine expert to help you with these issues and more?

Dance specialized physical therapists can look at your technique and help you to pinpoint the above mentioned concepts so that you can maximize your dance classes and develop some plans for how to reach that next level. They are typically physical therapists who either are dancers or have worked with dancers extensively. They know terminology, body mechanics, common injuries and then know how to help you make changes to your technique, develop exercises to address your weaknesses and tightness so to get you dancing better than ever!



Conclusion:

At Kinesphere Physical Therapy, we specialize in treating dancers. Our name, Kinesphere, is actually a dance term meaning, “the sphere of space around yourself that you can move in.” We strive to help our dancers reach beyond themselves to achieve the best dance technique and artistry possible.

We have a passion for treating dancers and are one of very few physical therapy clinics in Kansas City that specializes in treating dancers.

Come check us out to feel the Kinesphere difference!

Noelle and Ashley

Doctors of Physical Therapy

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Health Advice Disclaimer:

We make every effort to provide up to date, accurate advice on injury and prognosis in this report.

The examples of injuries and prognosis are based on our clinical experience. This means your particular situation may be different and therefore the information given may not be specific to your exact injury. With all medical issues, the recovery process varies significantly based on symptoms, length of time with symptoms, tissues involved, lifestyle factors, genetics, previously existing conditions, exercise execution, postural choices and motivations. Correctly following this information is beyond our control.

As Physical Therapists, we know we are unable to be fully accurate without a thorough history of symptoms and a physical examination. The inability to be able to participate in this, means any dance medicine advice cannot be fully accurate. With that said, we highly encourage you to schedule an evaluation with a licensed physical therapist with dance medicine experience to ensure you are given the appropriate care.

We are also trained to refer to other professionals when we see an injury beyond our scope. There are NO guarantees of specific results in this report, nor are they implied by Kinesphere Physical Therapy LLC.

