

MOVEMENT SESSION

Developing optimal muscle control to establish symmetry in the dancer

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By design, the human body is not symmetrical. The respiratory, neurological, muscular and circulatory systems have anatomical differences that together can create functional imbalance. It is through the integration of these imbalances that optimal function, positional control and the least amount of strain onto the human structure can take place. Incorporating components of these different systems into a stabilization program specific for dance should provide the best ability to balance the demands placed upon the body.

Dance medicine specialists, dancers, dance educators, movement specialists, and those seeking an enriched understanding of multiple system integration need to understand the importance of trying to develop more neutrality in the human system. To be able to do this, one must have an improved understanding of the natural element of anatomical asymmetry and resultant common compensatory muscle imbalances that occur as a result. There must also be an ability to integrate specific muscles for their ability to act more effectively as positional and eccentric stabilizers.

It is important to first gain a background on proper diaphragmatic anatomy and function in order to learn how to control respiratory balance through specific breathing exercises. Once able to perform properly, then introducing props such as common balloons for increased somatosensory input will aid in optimal diaphragm restoration. Re-establishing this Zone of Apposition (1) helps to reduce tone in the system and improve recruitment of muscle activity in more desirable areas.

Building on this base requires performing exercises in supported positions in the frontal and sagittal planes prior to transverse or tri-planar activity where there is an increased risk of compensatory movements. Introducing specific exercises to train the proper muscles with the use of bolsters and resistive bands further aids in maintaining this balance. Cues on positional retraining and awareness for optimal carry-over onto the floor will also be reviewed. (*This program will be utilizing balloons which have latex in them*).

1. **ZOA Position and Mechanical Function.** Hruska, RA. Course handouts from *Postural Restoration and Myokinematic Repositioning*, Postural Restoration Institute, 2002-2011.