

# KEEPING UP WITH THE COUNT

DANCING THROUGH COVID-19



A former dancer herself, sports medicine physician **Jane S. Chung, M.D.**, knows that young dancers are passionate about their training and haven't let COVID-19 slow them down. Whether taking virtual classes or training independently, every dancer can make simple changes to prevent injuries.

## DANCING ON RESIDENTIAL FLOORING MAY LEAD TO NEW INJURIES

- Prolonged dancing on rigid floors or tile can increase the risk of shin splints and patellofemoral (knee) pain. Marley and sprung floors, common in dance studios, are designed to reduce stress on bones and joints.
- Dancers spend time performing movements on the ground, in modern and contemporary dance styles. Consider placing a yoga mat on the floor to protect your knees and to perform these movements more comfortably.

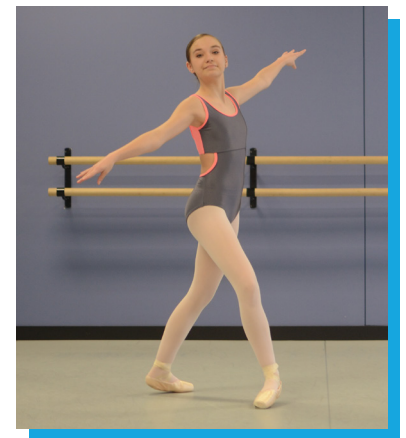
## INCREASE FUELING AS YOU INCREASE DEMANDS ON YOUR BODY

- It is important to properly fuel your body as you return to dance. Proper hydration and adequate nutrition are necessary for optimal performance, strength and injury prevention.
- As you increase training hours and intensity, it is necessary to increase the number of calories consumed. Energy deficiency underfueling can lead to stress fractures and decreased performance.

## TRANSITIONING BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC TRAINING

- Listen to your body as you re-integrate back to your dance routine. You may not have been dancing as much as you typically would, so expect your body to have experienced some level of deconditioning. It may take several weeks to months for your body to return to pre-COVID shape.
- A slow and gradual re-introduction back into dance allows your body to build up the load and impact tolerance, strength and endurance. Do not push through the pain. Be kind to your body and take breaks as needed.
- Every body is unique. Work with your dance instructor to come up with developing a reintegration plan that works best for you.

It is important to pay attention to your body. Pain, discomfort, fatigue and stress are signals the body needs attention. Responding early to signs of injuries, overtraining and/or underfueling can help you prevent and even overcome many conditions that may worsen if left untreated.



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