



8 Tips to Help Your Dancer Get Unstuck

Whether it's...

difficulty pointing their feet
knees that don't straighten
being just shy of a full split
tapping hands down in an aerial
falling out of the same turn every time...

we know that sometimes as an instructor, you get stuck trying to figure out how to help your dancer overcome their technical challenges. We know because sometimes it's hard for us too. But we've narrowed down the key concepts and things you *need* to know to *become a master* dance technician who is able to conquer any dancer's movement or flexibility challenges.

Our 8 Tips to Help Your Dancer Get Unstuck highlights the common concepts that go overlooked when conditioning dancers to improve technique, prepare them for level advancement, or help them recover from injury. Keep them in mind the next time you're finding yourself frustrated when trying to help your dancers. And know that we are always here to help! We work with instructors in lots of different ways to help them add to their skills and experience to be the best instructors for their dancers that they can be.

So scroll down for the tips 😊 We hope you like it!

~ The DancemED Team



8 tips to help your dancer to get unstuck

1. **Remember that flexibility is a privilege, granted by stability.** Movement anywhere in the body is only granted when the body feels safe and stable. So, if you haven't looked into core stability to improve flexibility throw in a few side planks or resisted rotation to your flexibility program to see if it gets you closer to your goals.
2. **Remember that core stability goes from teeth to tail.** You probably know that core stability involves spinal muscles, and that the jaw and neck is part of the spine. But do you check or incorporate neck stability when you're working on core stability with your dancers? Things like allergies, braces, surgeries, and headaches can affect neck stability (aka "upper core"), which can affect lower core stability, hip flexibility, and more. So, make sure to check and add upper core stability when it's needed to get your dancers performing their best.
3. **Break down technique to build up performance.** A dancer with low legs in leaps may also have low kicks. Low jump height may start with a shallow plie. Make sure there isn't an alignment, instability, or mobility issue in a single area or more simple skill when you see issues in larger, complex movements. Don't be afraid to reassess the basics – stress, growth, or nutrition can throw things off at any time.
4. **If it's not working, it's not the solution, so move on.** We have a saying at the clinic, "The body never hesitates to heal when you present it with right solution." So if you're trying a stretch, exercise, a type of cue, or anything else and it's not working, it's not you; you're not doing anything wrong. That's likely just not the solution, so look for another solution and try that.
5. **Tight joints are a cry for stability too.** Whether it's difficulty pointing feet, straightening knees, or lengthening elbows, tightness around a joint is often a compensation for core instability. Find and address the source of the instability first before expecting any gains around tight joints.
6. **Know the why before you try.** Your dancers will get better faster when you understand the reasons behind their faulty movement pattern and focus on fixing that. For example, don't just stretch a muscle that appears to be tight. Figure out why the muscle may be restricted and let that guide how you help the dancer. They could actually need strengthening, hydration, or another type of help. Knowing what the body truly needs is the key to fixing things fast.
7. **Remember, no system works alone.** The fastest way to "finding the why" is by remembering that all body systems rely on the health and stability of other systems to perform their best. Muscle issues may not be due to muscle problems. Muscles issues are frequently caused by instability in nearby systems, so keep that in mind when your dancers seem to be struggling and show little to no progress with exercises.
8. **Have access to an expert.** Having a dance medicine expert as a mentor gets your dancers better faster, improves performance faster, and helps to create a reputation of excellence in technique, performance, and health. A good reputation can lead to more enrollment and growth in your studio. Find an expert you can contact anytime for general support, dancer emergencies or extra training for you or your studio. (Interested in our mentoring program? Email us for more info at info@dancemed.org 😊)



Bonus Links!

“When to do when exercises don’t work”

Sometimes another body system can be holding back the progress of your dancer.

Check out these videos on our YouTube channel.

If any of the videos yields improvement in your dancer’s flexibility, contact us.

This means another body system is involved in restricting your dancer’s performance, and we can help!

Digestive system release

<https://youtu.be/RGhbjGU84RM>

1 min lymph reset

<https://youtu.be/qzGW-pQsBOU>

Jaw release

<https://youtu.be/0d4BvMDJ0y0>