



Holiday Guide for Dancers: How to Rest without Losing Your Best



The holidays are almost here. This means a chance to enjoy hanging with friends and family and spending a little bit of time away from the dance studio. Make time for a few key exercises to make your return to dance in the New Year smooth and strong:

Cardiovascular Training

Keep your fitness up by getting your heart pumping with some non-dance activities:

- Medium intensity repetitive, rhythmic activities → swimming, biking
- High intensity interval activities → skiing, skipping rope

Release Your Muscles (and Your Mind) with a Tennis Ball

- The ball goes between you and the floor or the wall → good spots to try are the back and sides of your hips and your calves
- Make sure the ball is on muscle (it should feel soft – never bony, tingly or throbbing); it should feel tender, but not painful
- Instead of using the ball to ‘massage’ out tension, use it to create sustained pressure on a tight spot
- Focus on the spot, take 5 – 6 deep breaths as you think about the muscle at that spot lengthening, softening, melting, relaxing...

Keep Your Core Engaged – Knee Fall Out Exercise

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and hands on the bones at the front of your hips
- The bones you are feeling are the front of your pelvis – they should stay perfectly still while you slowly lower one knee at a time out to the side (exhale) then lift it back up to the starting position (inhale)
- Repeat until you feel fatigued or your pelvis starts to move
- You should feel the work across the front of your lower abdomen between your pelvic bones (you are working a deep core muscle called transversus abdominis)



Keep Your Turnout Tip Top – Running Man Exercise

- Lie on your side with your top hip and knee bent to 90° and supported off the ground so the leg is parallel with the floor
- Bend your bottom knee to 90° but keep your thigh pointing straight below you
- Think about the bottom thigh bone rotating in your hip socket to lift your foot and shin off the floor then slowly return to the starting position
- Keep your glutes and hip flexors relaxed throughout the exercise
- Aim to complete 2 sets of 10 – 15 reps on each leg at a time

