

## MONTHLY TIPS FROM UPMC SPORTS MEDICINE #4: CORE STABILITY

The core is a group of muscles that provide more than just aesthetics; it is the center of stabilization for the entire body. As dancers are required to make very precise, quick, and fluid movements, the core muscles provide a stable base for the arms and legs to perform the desired motions.

In healthy individuals, the core is easily called on to stabilize the spine and provide a firm base for support. Some of the commonly referenced core muscles are the transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, obliques, deep low back muscles, and diaphragm. These muscles are all designed to work automatically with movement.

A dysfunction of the core may occur following overuse, neglect, or injury to the body. This dysfunction may present as back pain or difficulty performing movements that had previously been easy. Fortunately, recovery can be made by performing specific exercises and practicing.

The following are issues that may be noticeable in those who lack proper core stability:

- Change in bowel or bladder function
- Fatigue
- Sensation of being “out of control” during jumps/spins/landings
- Difficulty balancing in various positions
- Pain in the back, hips, or shoulders
- Tingling or aching in the extremities
- Difficulty maintaining neutral or proper postures
- Poor proprioception (awareness of when your body is in space)

The following are approaches to addressing these problems:

- See a licensed healthcare provider. A physical therapist (PT) can conduct a more thorough screening of your muscles to determine if core stability is a problem.
- Speak to a PT about an exercise program to address postural issues, correct muscle imbalances, train your core musculature, teach self-corrections, and work on proprioception and balance.
- Talk to your choreographer, teacher, or coach about your current symptoms to allow time to recover and treat the issue.
- Visit a physician for additional testing if you have more severe symptoms. A PT can help you find the right physician for you.

**To schedule an appointment, or to learn more about UPMC Sports Medicine, visit [UPMCSportsMedicine.com](https://UPMCSportsMedicine.com) or call 1-855-93-SPORT (77678).**

*Check in next month for more dance health tips from UPMC Sports Medicine.*

