



DANCE FITNESS **Why Train for Aerobic Fitness?**

In any form of dance training the body is exposed to a workload or physical stress. The intensity, duration and frequency of this workload/physical stress will determine how much training effect and physical change will occur within the body.

Dance unlike other physical activities requires all aspects of the fitness menu to be covered. These elements are stamina (aerobic fitness), suppleness (muscle flexibility/joint mobility), strength, body composition, anaerobic fitness and muscle speed/power. Injury is more likely to occur if the fitness components are unbalanced.

Aerobic fitness, stamina or cardiovascular fitness involves the uptake, transport and utilisation of oxygen to release moderate levels of energy. As dance training is often stop start activity this system is often not utilised during the usual dance class/rehearsal periods.

Training for aerobic fitness means raising the heart to an appropriate level which is then maintained for a suitable period of time. For most dancers in their teens and twenties, two or three training sessions a week of approximately half an hour at a heart rate of around 150-169 bpm (beats per minute) will produce an acceptable increase in aerobic fitness. The choice of which type of aerobic training is best is really up to the individual - what you have done in the past and what feels right for your body to do. Some suggestions are swimming, aqua jogging, exercise bike, cross trainer, gym class, walking, skipping and running. Remember, if you choose to do an impact activity that wearing a good pair of shoes is essential. Also remember to warm up/warm down and to gradually build up your fitness programme.

Why train for aerobic fitness?

Because it can help you cope with long hours in the studio - class and rehearsals. It also facilitates recovery after physically demanding sessions. It is likely to ensure lower injury rates (90% of dance injuries are fatigue related) and therefore many more years of successful dance training and performance.

