

Reflections and Invitations

What ways can we invite equity in discussions around strength training and who has access to it?

Consider: Is muscular strength in your dance class or rehearsals gendered? Do all dancers have equal access to strength and conditioning (S&C) or conditioning classes? If you have access to free weights such as barbells, are these only used by the male dancers? Is the space available for strength and conditioning training friendly, accessible and supportive?

Strength and technical proficiency go hand in hand for safe execution of upper body movements. How can we give equal precedence in training these to fully optimize performance? Is strength and conditioning currently an integral part of your/your dancers' training? What steps can you take to integrate it into your/their schedule?

Consider: If there is strength and conditioning, is it compulsory or viewed as "supplementary" or "optional"? Is there something in their schedule that can be removed to ensure strength and conditioning can be accommodated?

Try adding the upper body warm up to the final stages of your normal warm up routine.

Were there any movements that felt particularly challenging? Why do you think this is?

Did your dance class feel any different afterwards, particularly during upper body movements such as a port de bras or any floorwork that includes planks or downdogs?

Hand placement – Next time you have your hands on the floor during something like a plank, try using the imagery of sand, or pulling the floor towards you to spread the weight through your hands.

Do you notice any difference in your wrist compared to your normal hand placement? Is it more or less comfortable?

Does this placement make your movements or static stance in a plank feel more or less stable?

Did you try any of the exercises? If so, which one(s)?

Were the movements challenging or easy?

Could you pay attention to which muscles were working?

Can you set yourself a goal? For example if you can currently complete 5 modified push ups can you set a goal of 10 modified push ups, or maybe 2 full push ups? What time-scale do you want to add to your goal?