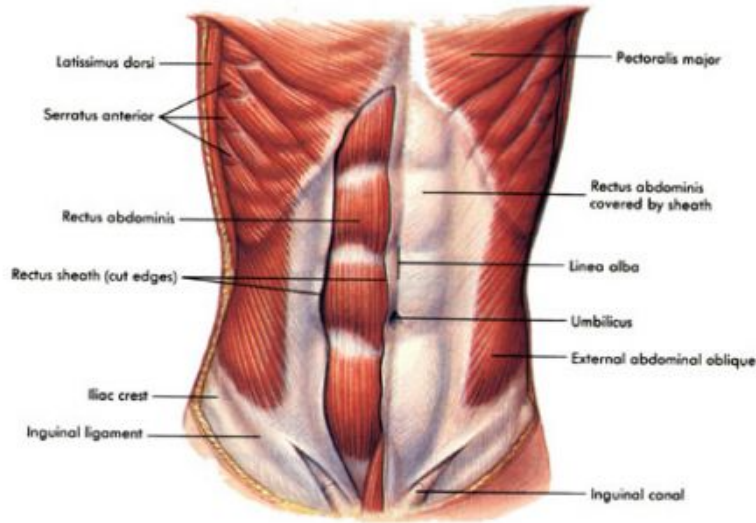


Cross Train Your Core



I am an accomplished, dancer, choreographer, coach etc...residing in NYC for the past thirty years who has been on a fifteen year hiatus from the competitive ballroom dance world. I retired from the circuit in 1995 after a very successful career. Becoming the first world champion for the United States, United States Ten Dance Representative three times, and eleven times undefeated basic Latin Champion. Also contributing to my retirement was the death of my mentor and coach Mr. Bob Medeiros who in my opinion was the greatest Latin dancer in the world and whom I know is looking down on me from heaven as I write.

As part of the competitive scene since 1977 I remember dancing for sheer joy and fun. But by the time I retired there was none of that left. Some was partly my fault but a lot of it was not being able to create what I wanted on the spot consistently. And from that point I think a dancer, artist, or competitor may experience some negative effects on their lives leaving them with a bad taste in their mouths. Sadly the end result is we lose so many talented people especially the coaches, teachers and dancers who can give back and carry on with many beautiful traditions of Ballroom and Latin dance while still conforming to the new "Dance Sport" venues.

During this hiatus I became knowledgeable and proficient in Kinetic movement, Anatomy, Ballet classes, Jazz classes, Alexander Technique lessons, and Yoga. In addition I was certified as a personal fitness trainer, a group fitness instructor, and a Master Pilates and Yoga teacher. Despite the diversity of approaches it all came down to integrating the same thing... Core placement. I do believe that not one style of anything will give you the complete picture or answer. We are all built so differently and all learn and perceive things and data so individually. I think the one thread we all have in common is to learn through Kinetic principle due to the fact that most of us have some similar body parts etc.... My goal is that this information will appeal to everyone but mostly to those who feel discouraged, frustrated or feel they have come to a stand

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still in their learning process, dance ability, teaching or performances. Level does not matter. J.

The following suggestions and definitions may open your mind to think out of the box and move ahead a lot quicker in your dance career and life hopefully with positive results. The following may help you integrate cross training your core into your program with the result of a better awareness of Core placement and its function.

Kinesiology is defined as the branch of mechanics concerned with the forces that cause motion in Bodies.

As a dancer you are responsible for your instrument or as we say in the performing arts world your "facility." It is your job to learn the names of muscles, bones, joints, as well as where they are located, their points of origin and points of insertion. And most importantly what their function is and how they work.

Get books and online information to get started. No excuses. Find a teacher or coach that can further your advancement in applying these basic principles to dance. Taking action to investigate these many principles is a great way to begin to change your dancing, career and your life. Take full responsibility for yourself and your body through Anatomy and Kinesiology. Your teachers and your coaches are only your guides. They cannot be with you 24-7. This applies from Social level to Competitive. If you are just learning steps with the feet you will only go so far. Connect with your core from day one.

Core: definition by Pilates Institute of America:

"To contract the Transversus Abdominus muscle and at times others to give mobility and stability to the pelvis and spine. The area of the body from the sternum down to the pelvis and around the back up to the armpits is considered core. (Also called the dancers square) Also includes the adductors."

We are just skimming the surface here. There is so much more is involved. But to connect your breath work to the Core is critical. Learning to connect with your body from the inside out is the best gift you can ever give yourself. By doing this you will not rely on someone else to give you happiness and satisfaction in dancing.

So I say to all dancers and everyone in the world the best thing you can do for yourself is to take a Pilates mat class in your area. It will give you the skill to stabilize your core like no other practice (except Ballet). It will change your whole perception of placement and you can do it lying down! You can master that skill separately to use for dance or for functional life purposes. Great for healing injured bodies and preventing future injuries.

Yoga: My favorite type is Iyengar. I have found this style teaches the Kinetic principles of Core and anatomical alignment that easily cross over with dance and Pilates. It is great for posture and flexibility and helps to integrate the mind with the body. This

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connection so desperately needed in the competitive world and everyday life. It teaches great meditation and focus skills as well. Peace of mind is a must. You can only depend on yourself for peace of mind.

*Also please note to clear all exercise programs first with your Physician before beginning or applying.

In closing let me say I hope this article opens your eyes (especially your third one) to the possibilities of incorporating Cross Training your Core into your lifestyle. This article is solely based on my last fifty years of dance-life experience, the last fifteen years of personal research and the motivation to continue this process by giving back to my fellow human beings as a teacher, coach, choreographer and adjudicator. I hope these suggestions will open your mind and soften your heart, brighten your day, give you more energy and renewed purpose, ensure a healthier life style, encourage you to be kinder to your fellow human beings especially your dance partner, and help you to reach your goals and enjoy dance again, and maybe think about saving an animal along the way.

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