Orthopedic Sports Therapy Announces Its Dance Injury and Prevention Program

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Tempe, Arizona, United States - June 27, 2016 /PressCable/ -- Orthopedic Sports Therapy treats a variety of orthopedic and sports conditions including those sustained by dancers. Dancers have a high level of exposure to injury as they practice their craft. Studies of professional dancers indicate injury rates as high as 85-95% yearly with an average of 7 injuries per dancer in a professional ballet company.(1) Not only do dancers sustain high rates of injury, but they are actually more likely to under report their pain and perform despite injury.(2) In short, dancers are tough. Orthopedic Sports Therapy keeps dancers dancing and limits their exposure to injury.

Like any sport there is always a risk of traumatic injury no matter what is done. That being said many dance injuries, both overuse and traumatic, are avoidable. The most common risk factors fall into these four categories:
1. Problems with training regimen. 2. Dynamic Lower extremity alignment issues. 3. Lack of Lumbopelvic control or strength. 4. Difficulty controlling hypermobility.

Orthopedic Sports Therapy physical therapists can address each of these four issues:
1) Training Regimen: Lack of sufficient cardiovascular endurance. Many dancers are committed to their craft that they dance daily but lack adequate cross training and cardiovascular training. One study found that teenage dancers in competitive level dance classes were moderately to vigorously active for only 10 minutes per one hour of class.(3) This is not adequate to build the cardiovascular reserves necessary for dance performances. This exposes the dancer to additional risk of traumatic injury.

2) Dynamic Lower extremity alignment: Less than optimal position of the foot, ankle, knee and hip relative to each other. Most non-contact dance injuries occur in the knee, ankle and low back. In an activity as complex as dance the minute alignment of the knee to the ankle, for example, may be overlooked. Small displacements can cause large problems over time. Physical therapists will analyze the movement pattern and instruct the dancer in fine adjustments to achieve the alignment that allows for optimal strength and protection to the joints. This often involves discussion with the dance teachers to understand the demands of the participant’s particular dance form and discipline.

3) Lumbopelvic control and strength: Lack of appropriate positioning or control of the pelvis and low back. The rigorous dance regimen does not always result in control and strength of the lumbar spine and its base, the pelvis. As the root of all movement, stability in this area is a great advantage to injury prevention. Once instructed, dancers with their amazing body awareness and proprioception, are very quick to learn lumbopelvic control and gain strength.

4) Hypermobility: Excessive flexibility without sufficient stability. Repeatedly taking an unprepared joint beyond its normal end range, as is common in dance, may cause overuse injury. The very flexibility that gives the dancer graceful lines puts him or her at risk for injury due to lack of stability. The physical therapist guides the dancer to strengthen and stabilize the joint and surrounding area, allowing the maximum movement that the dance demands while still protecting the joint and
connective tissue. The physical therapists at Orthopedic Sports Therapy assesses the dancer in the context of her or his style of dance, athletic demands and goals, considering all of the areas of potential injury. Clinic owner, Dr. Pamela Neuharth PT, OCS, states, "We are passionate about encouraging dance athletes to develop their body and training routine to allow them to get the most of their craft while also limiting their exposure to injury."

For questions about physical therapy for dance, please contact, Pam Neuharth, PT at (480) 921-9000 or go to http://orthopedicsportstherapy.com/ for more information.


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