



Dance Injuries: When to See a Doctor

Dance injuries span across all age groups What to do if you have a dance injury Tips to prevent dance injuries



Dance injuries have become increasingly common with the growing popularity of dance as an exercise and leisure activity.

Zumba, K-pop, piloxing and even cheerleading and pole dancing. These are just a few examples of how dance continues to grow in popularity – not just as an art form but also a form of exercise and leisure activity. However, this has also led to an increase in the number of dance-related injuries.

Common foot conditions include ankle sprain, Achilles tendinopathy (overuse injury causing pain in the Achilles tendon), Achilles tendon rupture, plantar fasciitis (the most common cause of heel pain), and fractures of the foot and ankle.

“These injuries may seem trivial initially, but not getting foot or ankle sprains or mild injuries checked by doctor can lead to serious problems or complications later,” advises Dr Kevin Koo, Consultant from the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Director of the Foot and Ankle Service at Singapore General Hospital (SGH), a member of the SingHealth group.

“Ankle sprains can account for up to 40 per cent of all sports or dance-related injuries, according to some reports. Apart from causing injury to ligaments and tendons, can also cause internal cartilage injury. A severe sprain can also cause fractures, while an unstable ankle (one that is prone to recurrent sprains) can lead to irreversible arthritis in the long run if left untreated,” Dr Koo adds.

Dance injuries span across all age groups

In young children, dance injuries can occur as a result of an attempt to perfect a technique without proper coaching or progressive training. In seniors, injuries tend to be due to a lack of proper conditioning before trying out a vigorous routine.

Many often dismiss such injuries as muscle strain or overuse instead of seeking timely treatment. Dancers passionate about their craft have even been known to continue dancing while enduring the pain.

“Not getting enough rest or not seeking treatment early may worsen the condition or injury, resulting in pain and functional impairment. Occasionally it can lead to irreversible joint arthritis. Seeking treatment late may also result in a need for more invasive treatment such as surgery.”

What to do if you have a dance injury

Seek proper medical treatment for your injury by seeing a doctor. For mild injuries, such as simple first-time sprains, doctors may recommend RICE (rest, ice, compression and elevation). For more severe or recurrent injuries, a referral to an orthopaedic foot and ankle specialist may be necessary.

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Tips to prevent dance injuries

- Before engaging in any physical activity, do adequate warm ups to gradually increase heart rate and blood circulation. This increases blood flow to the muscles to keep muscles warm, preventing acute injuries such as muscle strains and overuse injuries
- Always do muscle stretching before and after any exercise
- When increasing training intensity, do it progressively and know your limits
- Engage a certified instructor who is able to teach the proper techniques and develop a training programme or dance routine that is tailored to your fitness level and general health

Did you know [ankle sprains if not treated promptly and properly can lead to arthritis](#)? Click the link to find out more.

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