

## WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT BECOMES INJURED

Injuries in dance are not inevitable, but they can happen. With the right knowledge and application you can ensure that when injuries occur, they are well-managed. Remember to document any injury occurrence with a detailed incident report.

***Note: this is not medical advice. It is meant for guidance and information only. Always ensure dancers are working with their medical providers when injured.***

### Minor injury

If the injury observed seems slight—the dancer jumps back up quickly and seems willing to continue with class—ask them to sit and observe for a few minutes to regain composure. Ask if they would like to rejoin rehearsal, and if so, watch sharply for any physical signs that might signal more than a painful bump or muscle tweak.

### Moderate injury

If the injury seems moderate—the dancer is visibly reacting to pain; limping or otherwise modifying movement—sit the dancer down, ask them to rest, and call the parent. Suggest the dancer seek prompt medical attention, but do not offer any treatment (such as an ice pack). New research indicates that the often-used RICE protocol is considered outdated. Rather, it is best for injuries to be evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible to determine whether ice or heat is helpful for healing.

### Severe injury\*

If the injury seems severe—the dancer cannot move, you note swelling of the injured area, or if the dancer is crying or shaking from pain—consider calling 911. If there is a First Aid certified staffer available, ask them to assess whether a splint or supportive wrap would be a safe precaution to take. Have another staffer call the parent while one or two others stay with the student. Move other students to a different location in the studio and assure them that their classmate is being cared for—restore calm by resuming class or rehearsal.

\*If the injury is to the head and a student loses consciousness, call 911, followed by a call to the parent. In other head injury cases, be aware of symptoms like dizziness, nausea, and headache. If any of these are present, ask the student to sit, call the parent, and recommend a visit to urgent care or to the family doctor. Even if no symptoms are present, ask the parent to keep a close eye on the student.

#### Sources:

Dr. Danelle Dickson, owner, [Performance Plus Physical Therapy](#) & co-founder [Dance Ready Project](#)

Dr. Sheyi Ojofeitimi, [director of therapy services at Alvin Ailey American Dance Foundation](#) & co-founder [Dance Ready Project](#)

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