

On Grounding

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Grounding is an aspect of dance that describes being rooted to the floor through the force of gravity. Dancers that are well grounded are able to move along the dance floor with greater fluidity, precision and sharpness of movement. There are many benefits that result from being properly grounded.

To begin a discussion on grounding, it is important to first understand the concept of 'center of gravity'. This defines where and how an object balances with gravity acting on the object. Balance can be defined as an even distribution of weight at some central point which enables the object to remain in a state of equilibrium. The center of gravity can therefore be thought of as a central point within the body where the total mass is concentrated. It is generally assumed that the area around the solar plexus is the approximate location of a man's center of gravity and the area around the naval is the approximate location of a woman's center of gravity. This is only a general guideline since everyone's body shape and weight distribution is different.

Grounding is best achieved by lowering your center of gravity. This is accomplished by settling your weight downward into the

floor through the hips, legs, ankles and feet. Holding a lower stance forms a more solid base and therefore provides greater stability. It is also helpful to stretch the chest upward to maintain good vertical posture as this will facilitate grounding by keeping your balance centered. A good basic grounding formula for dance is to push down into the floor through the balls of the feet while stretching the chest upward. Both partners need to apply this fundamental principal of grounding while on the dance floor. This will help partners to move as one unit. Establishing good floor connection is essential for quality dancing. This is a point that cannot be overstated.

It is important to initiate dance movements from your center of gravity. This helps to ensure greater stability. Grounding issues occur for various reasons. One of the most common obstacles to grounding is the habit of initiating movement by falling forward from the upper body. This breaks the dance frame and immediately compromises balance. While this action is more common in everyday activities, it does not support good grounding on the dance floor. Initiating movement from an area above the center of gravity makes it difficult to maintain stable grounding. This action creates a top-heavy sensation that can easily result in loss of balance, which makes grounding more challenging. Moving in this manner can compromise one or both partner's ability to establish good grounding. The key to being grounded on the dance floor is to keep knees slightly flexed while initiating each step from the center of gravity with a good vertical posture.



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An excellent general-purpose grounding exercise is the 'horse stance'. This is most commonly practiced in the martial arts; however, it has many benefits for dancers as well. It is a stationary exercise that involves sinking down low into the stance with flexed knees. The body is held as if you are riding a horse, while hands are positioned in front of the body as though you are holding a beach ball. There are many benefits that can be derived from the horse stance. Since it requires deeply lowering your center of gravity, it helps to cultivate a strong stable grounded stance. The horse stance has a profound effect on the body as it greatly improves core strength as well as that of the legs, ankles and feet. It progressively conditions the body to sustain a lower stance for a longer period of time. The horse stance helps to build an improved connection with the floor over time. It is advisable to seek professional guidance before doing this exercise for both safety and to optimize its benefits.

Grounding is an important part of dancing as well as everyday movement. Being grounded helps dancers to become lighter on their feet because the weight bearing leg is more rooted into the floor. Therefore, it affords the dancer added control with a greater ability to move the free foot in a more precise and relaxed fashion. Make your connection with the floor deliberate by being mindful of grounding over each step. Good floor connection makes it easier to move through the dance with greater precision, control and stability.