



Recovery Strategies for Dancers

It is truism to say Irish Dancing is a highly demanding sport and dancers are top class athletes. I do not think anyone who would argue with that.

Although Irish Dancing is demanding on the body but especially on the feet and legs, the level of care and attention paid to these parts of the body is nowhere comparable to care given to other athletes in, say running or football.

Dancers, like runners and footballers who place a huge demand on the lower limbs, face special challenges. The challenges are not only in acquiring the skill during training or during high impact performances, but also during recovery.

The recovery phase is as important to any athlete in any sport as are the training and performance phases.

The essential factors necessary for peak performance therefore require planning for all phases. The various components necessary for the recovery phase include

- nutrition,
- hydration,
- looking after your feet and legs,
- rest and sleep,
- warming and stretching,

Looking after your legs and feet.

Warming and stretching

It is absolutely essential that every dancer warms up and stretches for about 10-15 minutes before they engage in a vigorous practice or performance. Warming up increases blood flow into muscles, increases warmth in tissues, oxygen and flexibility of ligaments.

The 15 minutes spent warming up is not time wasted considering that injury can mean weeks or months of pain and on the treatment bench.

The magic of Ice packs

Until now, ice treatment has been the mainstay of initiating recovery after a hard practice or performance session. This excellent means of recovery management is sound and seeks to reduce pooling in the extremities. Otherwise, you develop aches and pains which delays the next practice and may predispose the athlete to injury.



However, dipping your legs in an ice bucket is a short term measure and can have some undesirable side effects if not correctly applied.

The modern and ideal way of initiating and maintain recovery is to combine methods that are both scientific and known to work.

Active Recovery Plan – Energizing Socks

SmoothToe™ energizing socks are designed to initiate and hasten recovery and maintain the process until the next session.

Unique features of SmoothToe™ include the following.

- Contains 74% CoolMax fibre design and engineering that provides a wicking effect of moisture away from the feet. So your legs and feet remain cool and dry. This is important in avoiding blister formation and bruising.
- SmoothToe™ is a compression sock that applies gradual pressure from feet upwards encouraging fluid and blood return to the heart. When you have SmoothToe™ you do not then need to raise your feet. The fluid returns in any case.
- SmoothToe™ is cotton free. This important feature prevents retention of moisture and overgrowth of bacteria. Bacteria and fungus on feet is not only bad for people with diabetes but also for athletes like dancers.

Massage, Rest and sleep

This aspect has been emphasized recently in many sports research publications. Many athletes do realize the importance of a good night's sleep. Champions will have set patterns they have developed over the years. Yoga as a form of relaxation, conditioning and recovery is also becoming more popular.

SmoothToe energizing socks hug your leg and feel like you're getting a gentle foot massage while you wear them. Many people choose to sleep in them to extend the benefits.

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