



# MY DANCER IS IN A BOOT:

## A GUIDE FOR DANCE EDUCATORS / PARENTS



### Injury Requiring a Boot!

Here are a few common injuries we see that require a boot, immobilization, or limited weightbearing. Read on to learn more about the common issues we're addressing with dancers who have needed to spend time with boots to properly heal.



### What kind of injury is it?

#### Ligament Sprain

Most ankle sprains affect the lateral (or outside) part of the ankle.

#### What's going on?

Ligaments are strong, fibrous tissues that connect bone to bone, acting like internal restraints for the joint.

An ankle sprain occurs when one or more ligaments that support the ankle joint are stretched or torn.

#### Tendon Injury

Common foot tendons affected are the Achilles tendon, FHL tendon, and post tib tendon, amongst others.

#### What's going on?

Tendons are like a strong cord connecting muscles to bone. It helps to absorb shock, and assist in elastic recoil (like rebounding after landing a jump)

Injury occurs when the stress or loading happens at a faster rate than your body can repair; sudden increases in activity, returning to dance too quickly after injury.

#### Stress Reaction and/or Fracture

The lower leg bones (tibia and fibula) and the long bones of the foot (metatarsals) are particularly vulnerable in dancers

#### What's going on?

If the bone is repeatedly overloaded and doesn't get enough time to repair these tiny micro-cracks, the crack will grow

It starts as a "stress reaction" (painful internal stress) and, if ignored, can become a complete fracture.

### What questions should I be asking?

- "What specific structure is healing?"
- "What is the timeline for the healing process?"
- "When can I begin gentle movement or partial weightbearing?"
- "What are safe exercises during this phase?"
- "What are red flags that mean stop?"

#### Post-Boot Considerations

- Ankle sprains can lead to **proprioception deficits for up to a year**, training this area is critical.
- Ankle **instability can persist if the sprain is not properly treated**. Chronic Ankle Instability (CAI) can result especially after repeated sprains.
- Consider **lateral movements and vulnerable positions**. Be strong, but also be confident without fear.

#### Post-Boot Considerations

- **Tendons need load!** Proper treatment focuses on heavy slow resistance training to appropriately increase the tendon's strength and movement tolerance.
- **Some discomfort is part of the healing process.** A common guideline is the 24-hour rule: If baseline pain *increases* or *persists* for longer than 24 hours after exercise, it indicates the tendon was overstressed, and the exercise should be modified
- **Stretching can be more harmful than helpful.** Eccentric or isometric exercises are a good place to start instead.

#### Post-Boot Considerations

- **Growth spurts can mean reduced bone density.** When young dancers go through rapid growth, their height can increase faster than their bone structure can catch up. Bone healing is optimized with heavier loads.
- **Pain should be generally absent during rehab.** While achiness may be present at the bone heals under proper loading, reoccurrence of sharp pain is not to be taken lightly, as this indicates potential overloading again.
- **\*NUTRITION IS NON-NEGOTIABLE\*** Ensure adequate calcium, Vit D, and protein to give the bone the building blocks it needs.



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### What buckets can I start filling now to help return quickly and with confidence?

Even with an injury, you can (with a qualified professional) begin working with and around your injury; preserve movement variability, neuromuscular readiness, and confidence





# DANCE|PREHAB

PHYSICAL THERAPY & PERFORMANCE

## DISCOVER THE SUPPORT YOU DESERVE

At DANCE|PREHAB, our mission is to redefine the experience and standard of care, healing, and training for movement artists - whether it's dance, gymnastics, cheer, or life. We work together with you so you can get back to moving the way the need and the way you want, all while better equipped and with tools and knowledge for life.

Whether it's **coming back from injury** or **continuing to build strong human foundations**, we are committed to supporting the dancer, but also the human behind the dancer. To us, this means creating healing spaces for learning, application, and accountability to support movement artist resilience and longevity.



## THE DANCE|PREHAB DIFFERENCE

"Their attention to detail specific to a dancer was just what my daughter needed. **Not only was this journey a physical healing process, Dr. Claire supported my daughter mentally. For her this was a whole body and mind recovery.** Our family would highly recommend utilizing this facility to help recover or prevent injury for your dancer!"

- JJ, Dance Parent

"Not only has [DANCE|PREHAB] been helpful for healing my body physically, but mentally as well. DANCEPREHAB has allowed me to grow and heal while feeling motivated, safe, and incredibly supported. **I have learned various exercises and tools that I will be able to utilize for the rest of my life and my dance career.**"

- SP, Pre-Professional Dance Student

"Rob was able to adapt the sessions to a strength and conditioning experience, helping me prepare for overhead lifts in ballet pas de deux. **I've struggled with shoulder problems, joint damage, and surgeries since 15, so being able to press a person's weight overhead easily and without pain was amazing!**"

- SY, Professional Dancer

**LET'S START A CONVERSATION!**

