

# Shannon Buck | Session 3:

## Dance Vocabulary and Warmup Techniques

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**List of Required Supplies:** Paper, pencils, cleaning supplies as needed

**Space/Facility Requirements:** Table space, floor space,

**Student Time Required:** 45 to 55 minutes

### **Step-by-step Instructions:**

The instructor will demonstrate and lead the warmup and cooldown sequences. Students will participate and follow the instructions. After going through a couple of times, students will be demonstrating the techniques with a partner and helping each other in areas of need. The instructor will walk around and monitor the pairs to ensure that everyone is on the right movements. The instructor will stop and assist as needed, and he/she will help answer questions. The instructor will also give key points on the proper alignment of the stretch and continue to monitor the class until the time is over.

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## Dance Warmups And Stretches

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Use dance warmups and stretches to get ready for your dance class or other forms of exercise. Adequately warming up your muscles and taking a few minutes to stretch will help you to have a more enjoyable, injury-free dance class or other workout.

### 1. Neck Isolations

Isolations is a term used to describe a series of warmups in dance class that help your body to feel more agile. This warmup is usually performed with the feet shoulder-distance apart and the toes facing the front of the room. Bend your knees slightly and make sure that your spine is upright. The point of isolations is to focus on one body part at a time. With your hands placed on your hips and the rest of your body perfectly still, begin by looking to the right for a beat, and then to the left. This warms up the muscles of the neck. You can also slowly circle the head by dropping the head down, to the right, back and left. Repeat this circling motion to the opposite side.

### 2. Hip Swings

The hips are another part of the body that you can warm up during isolations. Holding the same stance as in the neck isolations, move your hips to the right and then left. Be sure to keep the rest of your body as still as possible. You can also circle the hips by pushing them to the right, to the back of the room, to the left, and then to the front. Reverse this motion to the opposite side.

### 3. Heel Raises

To warm up the calves and hamstrings, place your feet together with the toes facing the front of the room. You can also do this warmup with the heels together and the toes turned out, which is more commonly done in ballet. With a perfectly straight spine, raise your heels off of the floor, balancing yourself on your toes. Then lower your heels to the floor. Repeat this movement until your calves feel warm.

#### **4. Leg Swings**

To warm the entire leg, stand on one leg with the toes facing the front of the room. Lift the other leg off of the floor and bend it slightly as you swing the leg toward the front of the room and then toward the back of the room. Repeat this for a dozen repetitions on each leg. If you find that you have trouble keeping your balance, hold on to a chair or a wall.

#### **5. Lunge Stretch**

Lunge stretches are commonly done in jazz, modern dance, and hip-hop classes and are useful for stretching the muscles of your lower body. Start with your feet together and push one leg back behind you. Your front knee will be bent. Your back leg will be as straight as possible. As you deepen this stretch, place your hands on the floor. To prevent injuries, always be sure that your front knee is in line with your foot and not too far forward.

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## Warm Up, Cool Down, and Be Flexible

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An effective dance program is more than aerobic training and strength building. To really reap the benefits, you need to add flexibility and balance training to the mix.

Stretching can help your body get ready for exercise. It is also an essential part of recovering from aerobic activity. All exercise sessions should end with stretching — and not just for the mental relaxation benefits. Increasing your flexibility improves your ability to move easily and can reduce your risk for injury.

### **Warm Up**

A good warmup prepares your body for more intense activity. It gets your blood flowing, raises your muscle temperature, and increases your breathing rate. Warming up gives your body time to adjust to the demands of exercise. This can improve your performance and help you get the results you want.

The simplest way to warm up is to do an aerobic activity at an easy pace. If cycling is what you plan to do, then start out slowly in a low gear.

How long you spend warming up will depend on your fitness level. If you are newer to exercise, your body will respond better with a longer warmup.

Adding stretches to your warmup may improve your exercise performance. Once your muscles are warm, spend a few minutes on stretching. Since the goal of your warmup is to increase your heart rate and get you ready for more intense work, choose stretches that can be done standing up. Floor stretches are best for your cooldown segment.

## **Cool Down**

Just as a warmup prepares your body for exercise, an effective cooldown gives your body time to recover.

Your cooldown begins as you gradually decrease your intensity level at the end of your aerobic exercise session. For example, if you have been walking at a quick pace, begin cooling down by slowing your steps and taking your arms out of the movement. Walk at a comfortable pace until your breathing and heart rate have returned to normal.

Once you are breathing easily, stretch while your muscles are still warm.

## **Be Flexible**

Stretching is too often neglected by exercisers pressed to fit workouts into their busy schedules. This common mistake can reduce the effectiveness of exercise because better flexibility results in better fitness.

By increasing your flexibility, you can improve your ability to move around. You will have less muscle tension and your posture will likely improve. Most importantly, stretching after each workout reduces your risk for injury.

Get the most out of your flexibility training by following these simple guidelines:

- Always warm up before your stretch. Stretching cold muscles can cause injury.
- Stretch slowly and gently. Breathe into your stretch to avoid muscle tension. Relax and hold each stretch 10 to 30 seconds.
- Do not bounce your stretches. Ballistic (bouncy) stretching can cause injury.
- Stretching should not hurt. If you feel pain, take the stretch easier, breathe deeply and relax into it.

Below are some sample stretching exercises. Be sure to hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds.

### **Quadricep (front of thigh)**

Hold the top of your left foot with right hand and gently pull your heel toward your buttocks. Repeat with other leg.



### **Calf**

Stand close to a solid support, and lean on it with your forearms, head resting on hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you, with the other leg straight behind. Slowly move your hips forward, keeping your lower back flat. Do not bounce.



### **Hamstring**

Sit down and straighten your left leg. Bend your right leg with the sole of your foot resting next to the inner thigh of your straightened leg. Lean forward from your hips and reach toward your foot. Keep your left foot upright with the ankle and toes relaxed. Repeat with right leg.



## Upper Body

In a standing or sitting position, interlace your fingers. With your palms facing upward, push your arms slightly back and up.



## Tricep (back of upper arm)

With your arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of your other arm. Gently pull the elbow behind your arm. Do it slowly. Repeat with the other arm.



## Shoulder

Gently pull your elbow across your chest toward your opposite shoulder. Repeat with the other elbow.



## Inner Thigh, Hip and Groin

Slowly press your elbows onto your inner thighs and hinge forward at your hip.



## Lower back

Tighten your hip muscles, and, at the same time, tighten your abdominal muscles to flatten your lower back. Hold for 5 to 8 seconds, then relax. Repeat two or three times.

Pull your right leg toward your chest. Keep the back of your head on the floor. Try to keep your lower back flat. Repeat with your left leg.

