

12/10/2011

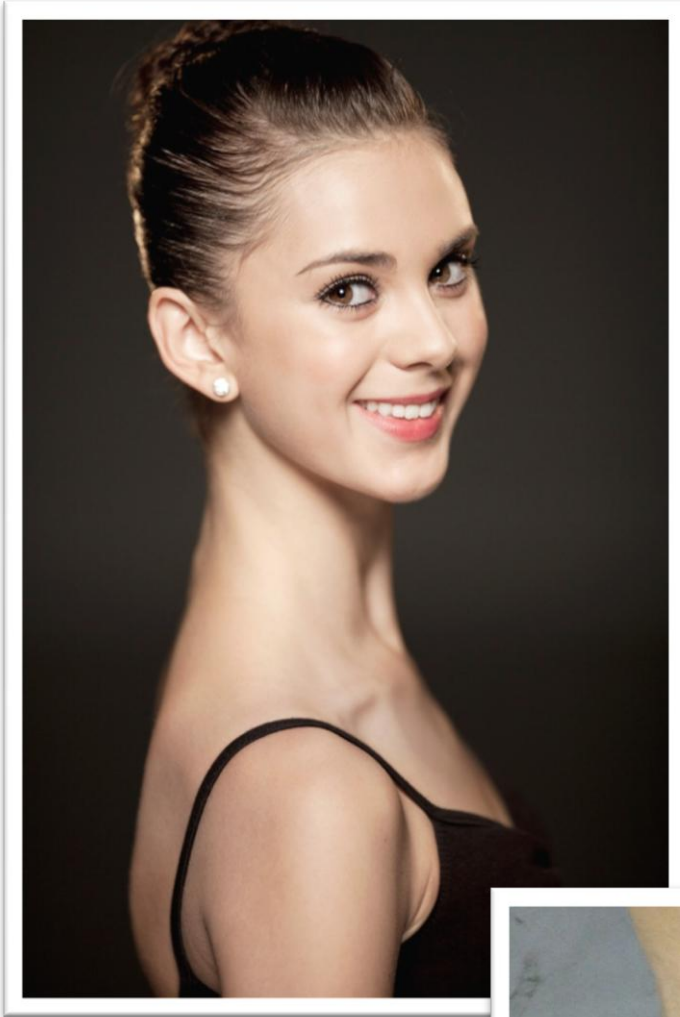
All About Bunions!



The Ballet Blog Webinars | Lisa Howell (B.Phty)

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All About Bunions!



Please meet
Lilly...

And her feet!



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Lilly is a 19 year old professional Classical Dancer, having a lot of problems with her feet...



She contacted me after hearing about my project of helping dancers deal with their foot and ankle injuries – and after a 90 minute Video call online, we decided that she would be a great Case Study for a call on Bunions!

There were so many things that we discovered – even in our first call – that made a very real difference to her - that I want to share with you...

So let's get started!

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Dance History:

- Lilly began dancing at age 6 in a “Tiny Local ballet school with concrete floors...!”
- Moved to Boarding school (The Harid Conservatory) with intensive Ballet program at age 13
- Moved to London at age 16 to attend The Royal Ballet School
- Secured a contract with Boston Ballet II after graduating RBS in 2011

Injury History:

- Has always had problems with weak feet
- Began working intensively on foot strength while at RBS
- Began to get bunion pain in 3rd year
- Was told “ everyone gets bunion pain”
- Left Bunion had a cortisone injection – March 2011 – Helped tremendously
- Now left toe is stiff – and bursa has come back – but the pain is minimal
- Two months ago – the right big toe started having the same problem...
- Now it hurts even to stand...
- Lilly has previously had stress reactions in both feet



Dance Schedule:

- 40 shows of Nutcracker starting this week...
- Normal Schedule: Class at 9:45, Rehearsals 11:30-6:30.
- Performance days: Class at 10:45, Rehearsals 12:30-4:30, Show at 7:30

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Investigations:

- Xray – Hallux Valgus ...(degrees?)
- Arthritis at the right bunion, possible bone spur
- Dr asked.. “How important is Dancing to you...?”
- Prescribed Celebrex and Iontophoresis

Current treatment:

- Ultrasound
- Stim Treatment
- Mobilization
- Massage
- Contrast baths
- Voltaren Gel 4 x day...
- Ice massage...
- Prescribed Celebrex and Iontophoresis
- Tried taping toe to pull it into alignment...
- You name it!

Pointe Shoes:

- Switched to Gaynor Mindens in March as they are soft around the bunion area
- Feels better in standing, but no support under metatarsal
- Had to work through high relevé to get en pointe
- Switched to Freed's which are more supportive and allow more dancing
- Always uses pointe shoes as unable to relevé on flat at all...
- Dreads contemporary in flat shoes or bare feet



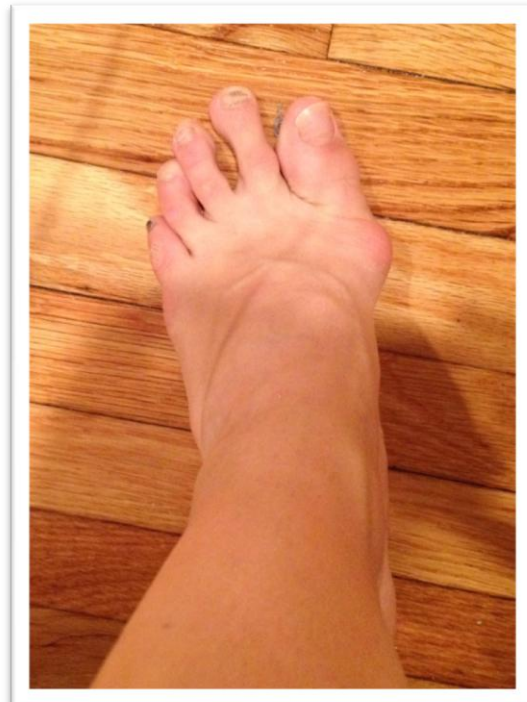
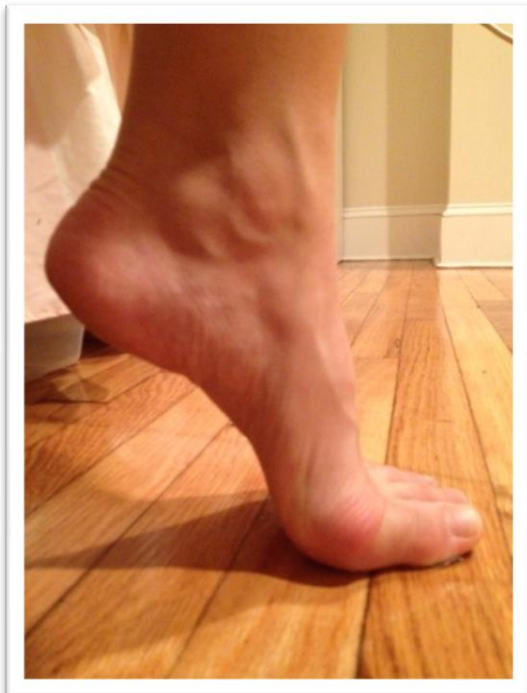
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**Before we talked – I asked Lilly a few questions...
and to take a few photos of her feet...**

This is her self assessment:



- Really big bunions
- Big toes always sit incorrectly in the joint
- Now, must be in incorrect alignment to bend upwards
- Has modified walking to walk on the outer border of the foot



- Very immobile big toe joints
- To get high on demi pointe big toes started to rotate and angle in
- Modifying dancing so much that technique is suffering
- Hopping onto pointe rather than rolling through

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And this was my assessment:



Standing in first:

- Gripping with Tibialis Anterior
- Gripping with Tibialis Posterior
- Slight pain around inner ankle
- Over turning turnout – increased pressure on big toe
- Obvious redness over both big toe joints

Plié:

- Good range
- Slight pain around inner ankle

Rise:

- Unable to rise without pain
- Able to place foot into $\frac{3}{4}$ demi point position (Non Weight Bearing) – limited by pain
- Pain localised in big toe joint on each side
- Some pain in posterior ankle as well

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Pointed Foot:

- Good pointe range
- Clawing of toes
- Able to keep big toe extended

Dégagé Derrière

- Increased weight bearing on big toe
- Bending big toe at middle knuckle
- Clawing of toes
- Rolling in of supporting foot

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Observation of foot:

- Hallux Valgus – bilaterally
- Weakness in forefoot – spreading of ball of foot over time
- Redness around bunion
- Big toe rotated in – (Toe nail not facing the top)
- Difficulty isolating intrinsic foot muscles
- Poor tone of foot muscles in standing
- Shaping arch by lifting with Tibialis Anterior and Tibialis Posterior



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Retire:

- Rolling in of supporting foot
- Curling big toe of lifted foot
- Weight back on heel
- Gripping Tibialis Anterior
- Increased pressure on bunion
- Sitting back into knee slightly

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Pointe Shoes:

- Box too narrow? Cutting in under head of first toe
- Good shape through arch of foot
- Pulling back from full ankle range
- Not working through ball of foot

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So what did I suggest?!

1. Hands on releases of FHL, FHB, FDL and FDB - Massage of muscle belly only – not over tendon...
Result? Instant increase of pain free range of demi pointe and no pain around inner ankle en fondu



2. Release of intrinsic foot muscles..
Result? Easier to isolate intrinsic foot muscles



3. Mobilization of the joint between 1st metatarsal and Medial Cuneiform ...
Result? Increased ability to position 1st MT and 1st toe



4. Activation of Interossei to draw 1st MT back into line, Taping to support rotation of 1st MT into correct position



5. Toe swapping and doming exercises with toe in good alignment



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6. Standing in first – reduce range of turnout, Tripod foot exercise, activation of intrinsic foot muscles, relaxing tendons at front of ankle by turning out from the hips and shifting weight ‘up’



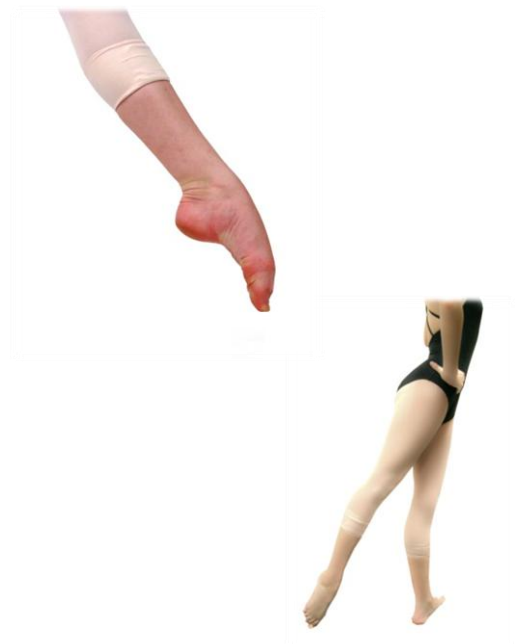
7. Creation of customised foot thong to support under head of short 1st MT when on demi pointe



8. Ice bath for the tendon pain... Not for inflammation... but for increased vascularisation in degenerated tendon – helps reduce pain



9. Keeping toes long when pointing, avoid clawing big toe or other toes.



10. Avoid pressing onto big toe in degage.

11. Pointe shoes – look at padding options and fitting wider shoes with a longer wing.

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First day back at class...

- Very excited to actually get into class rather than dreading it!
- Reduced turnout a little and worked on weight placement at barre...
- Could feel the muscles in the ball of the foot really working to stabilise
- Less load on tendons
- Much improved control of feet and warmed up for performance!

A few days in... In an email...

Dear Lisa! Thank you so much!

I've been telling my friends about you and everything you've been helping me with and they're all jealous of me! They said they want Skype meetings with you because it sounds like your working miracles for me! I should probably watch how much I talk about you otherwise you'll be bombarded with requests! But don't worry, I told them you were sending books and they're all excited :)

I tried the 2 types of taping you taught me today and they both helped so much. I really liked the taping that keeps my 1st metatarsal lifted into place. It restricted my left foot's relevé, but I think that's a good thing because I think it stopped my toe from going into the wrong position to get a high relevé.

The reusable padding for under my first metatarsal was amazing in my flat shoes. My big toe felt in a more comfortable and relaxed position. Standing didn't hurt at all. And I could do a bit of a relevé on both feet (but I didn't push it). The only problem is, I couldn't fit it in my pointe shoes. So I might try to experiment with that, because I'd love to feel that same relief in pointe shoes too.

xoxox Lilly

The Plan Of Attack!

- While Nutcracker is on, the aim is to reduce pain and get through the season
- Begin strengthening and learning more about her feet!
- Retrain each of the muscles that support the foot – to perform its own job
- Work slowly through specific sections of The Advanced Foot Control Program
- Create a management plan for the feet – so she can keep dancing!

Summary:

- This is why I get so frustrated
- Most of the issues that Lilly has been having could have been prevented
- Training a dancers feet must start early
- It must be specific to the dancers foot
- It must transfer from specific exercises into class work - It must be a lifestyle!

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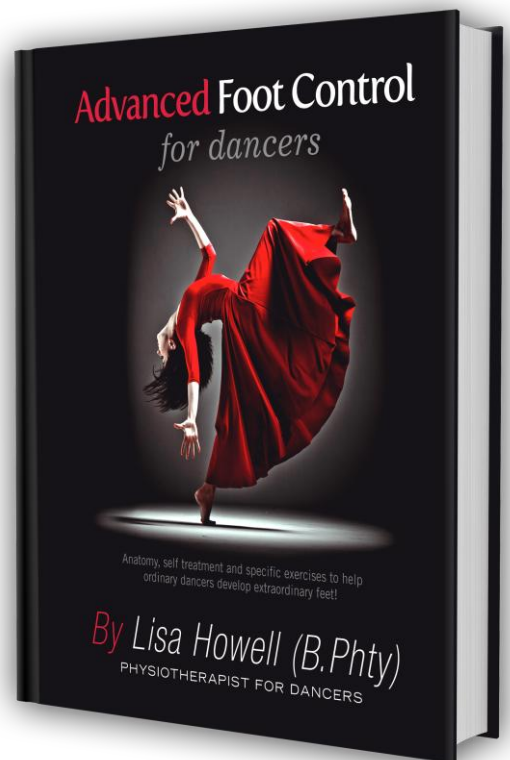
The Brand New

Advanced Foot Control for Dancers Program

Is ready to launch!

This completely revised course is now available in a full colour hard copy book plus many other bonuses...

- Over 2 hours of video content explaining the anatomy of the dancers foot in detail, but in a really easy to learn and understand way!
- Six different Injury Reports – in either video or PDF format – to help you recover fully from, and prevent the most common dancers foot injuries
- 4 bonus taping videos and 6 PDF's to help you support your feet in class while they get stronger!



Special Webinar Only Offer!

Download 2 Videos from the program for FREE!

- One 15 minute video explaining all about the Soleus Muscle... Its anatomy, how to strengthen it and how to massage it to protect your Achilles tendon and improve your jumps!
- One 6 minute video explaining all about Shin Splints... One of the most common, and persistent injuries dancers get – and one that is often poorly treated.

Download them today for FREE!

www.AdvancedFootControl.com/webinarspecial

PLUS!

The first 100 people to purchase the

Advanced Foot Control for Dancers Program

today will receive a FREE red resistance band with their order!

(Webinar attendees get a 2 hour head start on everyone else!)