

# A Plan For The Holiday Season

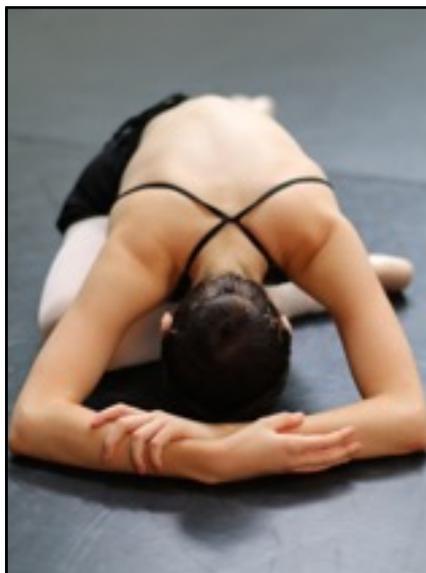
## How you can use this downtime effectively



Are you unsure about what to do or how to use your time best during the break? Do you know what exercises to practice?

Rest allows dancers or any sportsperson the ability to perform at their peak and to prevent injury. However, some dancers are scared of losing the strength and flexibility that they have gained during the year over a long period of rest. Others participate in holiday workshops and holiday competitions and therefore don't allow the mind and body enough time to rest or recover. Going into Term 1 in the New Year can be a daunting task if you have been doing too much during the break, so what's the right thing to do?

This article discusses the 2 types of dancers we see at Perfect Form Physiotherapy to help you determine what is the best plan of action for you during this holiday period.



Over the holidays find time to write down your goals that you would like to achieve over the year to come!

## SMART Goals

### Specific

The "who", "what", "why", "where" and "when". The more specific you are, the better the result. For example, "I want to be able to do a flat grande jeté with turned out legs so I can perform it well in my solo".

### Measurable

How are you going to track your progress? The "how much" and "how many".

### Achievable

Is it realistic? Remember that prizes and competitions in dance are extremely subjective, so a goal to win a certain competition may not be realistic.

### Relevant

Does your goal tie into the big picture? Having a goal of 6 turns in a row is not necessarily going to make for good choreography in your next solo, so a clean and consistent double turn might be more relevant!

### Timely

The "when" or "by" and frequency.

# The Recreational Dancer



If you are a student that enjoys dance in a small to moderate amount (up to 15 hours per week), you will tend to gain many benefits during the year by working consistently. You will have gained improvements in flexibility, hip control, core strength and in general, improvements on your skills like turns and jumps. Most dancers can reflect on the year that has passed and remember the things they couldn't do that they can now do without any difficulty. Fancy all that going to waste over the holiday period! Or worse still, going back in Term 1 and hurting yourself because your body hasn't been able to stay supple and strong!

If this sounds like you, the holiday period is not an open invitation to be sedentary and spend hours a day playing video games and watching TV!

Participate in daily activities other than dance like riding a bike, jumping on a



trampoline, swimming at the beach and spending time with family and friends.

For mobility and flexibility you can create a daily routine to work on your individual areas that need attention that takes about 10-15 minutes. The mobilisers should include movement of the feet, hips and spine and then a combination of all of these joints. If you are unsure of what you should include, make sure you speak to your Physio about planning your holiday program to make the most of your time off.



Download the Warm Up and Cool Down handout from [perfectformphysio.com.au/pdf-downloads](http://perfectformphysio.com.au/pdf-downloads)



Learn how to put together a great holiday exercise program with our **Dance Conditioning 2 Manual**

**The few weeks leading up to the start of the term you should start working on a few key areas:**

- Feet and ankles with doming and rises.
- Deep abdominals and pelvic floor
- Deep hip isolation and turn out control
- Shoulder and scapula stability

Your daily routine in the 4 weeks leading up to the start of your dancing year can be a combination of mobility and strengthening and should take up to half an hour. This will allow your body to slowly get used to the increased loads that it will be under once you start dancing again

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# The Competitive/ Full Time Dancer



On the other side of the spectrum, some dancers dance many hours a week in all different styles, or may be focused on just one style e.g. ballet. These students typically rehearse or practice most nights of the week and might even be involved in multiple dance studios and therefore increasing the physical and mental demand on the child. Although dance is really meant to be an art form, many students are required to train and practice like athletes and are also increasingly being asked to perform the skills of a gymnast.

**The American Academy of Paediatrics Council on Sports Medicine & Fitness** recommend the following guidelines for children and youth to prevent overtraining:

- Limiting sporting activity to one sport a week to maximum 5 days per week

- Have one day a week that is free of organised activity
- 2 – 3 months off per year

*(Brenner, 2007)*

**What is overtraining?** Although there are no conclusive studies on overtraining in children, there are signs that “burn out” is occurring from being physically and mentally drained. It is a very individualised phenomenon and symptoms include:

- Loss of appetite
- Sleep disturbances
- Negative feelings and loss of interest in activities
- Social problems with family and friends
- Short tempered
- Decreased self-esteem
- Increased injuries, illness or infections

*(Matos & Winsley, 2007)*

Part of what increases the risk of overtraining in dancers is the nature of a non-existent off-season as well as the Type-A personalities that are drawn to dance. Parents and teachers can sometimes put pressure on young dancers and low self-confidence and anxiety levels can also play a part at increasing the risk of overtraining.

**([orthopedics.childrenscolorado.org](http://orthopedics.childrenscolorado.org))**

If you do many hours of training with high pressure and expectations, it is highly recommended that the holiday period is optimised with adequate rest. Perhaps you should rethink the workshop or competition that is scheduled for the holiday period because a few extra weeks off can mean a MUCH LONGER career in dance whether it's through your teens or into adult hood. When a holiday is not possible (which it always is), cutting back to 25-50% of the hours danced would also be hugely beneficial to allow the body time to recover and rejuvenate. You can participate in non-dance activities that keep you active and fit but are also enjoyable like cycling, swimming and bush walking! Sometimes it is difficult to understand that there are many more years to come, however you should start thinking about when during the year your peak performance should be. Part of the holiday period should be spent setting short and long term goals and planning your training for the next year.



# A To Set The Best Goals...

## Make Them Smarter

You can see on the front page of this article what each letter stands for. Remember that your goal is **YOURS** and that it needs to be meaningful to you!

### Here's an example goal:

By the end of Term 1, I want to be able to do a clean double pirouette in turn out from 4th position to both sides. I want to sustain a high demi pointe, a strong turned out retiré and to achieve a consistent double in class for a 2 week period.

When you have been able to outline your goal so specifically, you can see that you will have to work on various components of your turn, rather than just trying your best turn over and over again. E.g. a high demi

pointe, retiré position and turn out, balance and consistency.

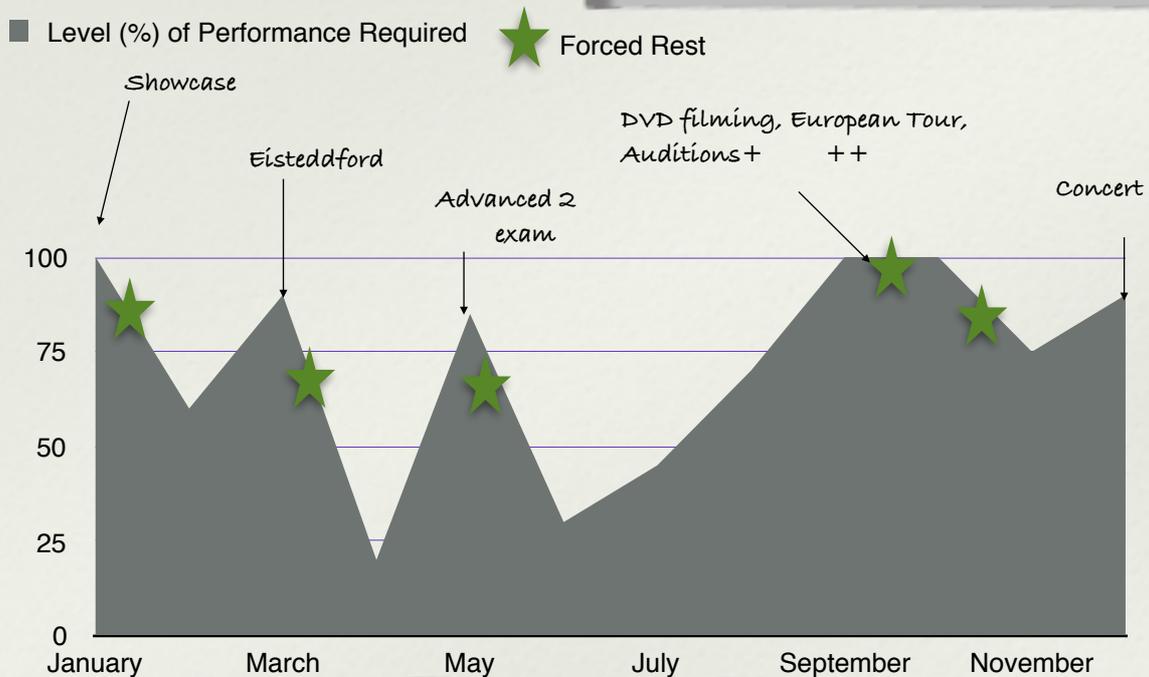


### For the Competitive/Full time Dancer

In addition to working on specific skills, you should also look at the year as a whole. Outline the competitions and performances that are planned for the year to come. You will need to plan forced rest periods, consecutive days off and times when you keep your legs lower or reduce the number of jumps you do. Below is an example of how you can do this.

**Come in and see us and get \$10 off any initial consultation with this flyer!**

### PLANNING THE YEAR AHEAD



### References

Brenner, J.S., and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness (2007) Overuse Injuries, Overtraining, and Burnout in Child and Adolescent Athletes Pediatrics, Vol. 119, No. 6, 1242 -1245