

The Top 5 Ways To Use Resistance Bands



What is so great about resistance bands?

Resistance bands can be a dancer's best friend when it comes to portable, multi-use economical exercise equipment! They are cheap and easily available, can be taken with you anywhere, and there is an unlimited number of exercises that can be done with them. However, most often dancers simply point and flex their foot directly into the band, which can actually develop the wrong muscles and encourage clawing! The following exercises are all safe for any age dancer to do. Use a medium to light resistance band and follow all of the instructions for maximal results. Let us know how you go on

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Pointe Through Demi Pointe with Band

Many dancers perform a similar exercise to this, but with the band looped around the toes. This can actually encourage clawing of the toes so we advise against it! Instead, loop the band around the outside of your left foot, and then under your right foot. Place a ball or small pillow between your knees to keep them apart and then pull the band until the foot sickles in slightly. Use the muscles down the outside of the lower leg to align the ankle, and then slowly pointe the ankle, then the toes, maintaining alignment of the ankle. Repeat 20 times, slowly, on each foot.



Rises with Resistance Band

Some young dancers (and older ones too!) struggle with the alignment of their ankles when on rise. A great way to strengthen the stabilising muscles down the outside of the ankle is to perform double leg rises with the band looped around the inside of the ankle. Attach the other end to a sturdy table or a friend's leg! Slowly rise and lower, maintaining alignment of the foot and ankle for at least 20 repetitions. When you can do this easily on two legs, try rising on two legs, transferring to one, hold for 3 counts, and then lowering on one foot. This exercise can also be done in turnout with the band pulling backwards.



Hamstrings with Resistance Band

Most people focus on stretching their hamstrings, but it is also very important for them to be strong in the inner ranges. This helps lift the foot higher in retiré and helps in taking the load out of the front/side of the hip. Lie on your stomach with the band tied loosely around the foot and securely anchored at the other end. Make sure that the pubic bone stays in contact with the floor and the knees are together. Slowly curl the foot in towards the buttocks, making sure not to arch the low back. Slowly release and relax the leg completely between each repetition. Start with just five repetitions, then gradually build up to 20 as your strength increases.



Turnout in 4 Point Position

This exercise helps dancers find their deep turnout muscles responsible for controlling the leg in a développé devant. Start in a 4 point position (on hands and knees) making sure not to hyperextend the elbows. Have the band around one foot and attached to a stable base off to the side. Keeping the pelvis very still, slowly rotate the thigh from the hip, bringing the foot of the working leg in to touch the other side. Hold for 3 counts, then slowly release, again keeping the pelvis very still. Make sure that there is no gripping or contraction at the front of the hip. Repeat 10 - 20 times, or until fatigue.



Tendus with Resistance Band

Stand side on to the barre, with the band attached to the working foot. Slowly dégagé the foot to the side, keeping the hips square. Make sure to stay lifted on the supporting side and do not sink the weight back onto the heel. Draw the working foot back into first position, using the deep inner thighs. Re-distribute the weight to both feet and maintain turnout from the deep rotators, while relaxing the top of the gluteals. Repeat 16 times. The tendu can also be performed in devant and derrière, keeping the band in the same position to further challenge the inner thighs and pelvic stabilisers.

Perfect Form Physiotherapy is a specialty clinic dedicated to the treatment and education of dancers.

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