

The Ballet Blog

ASSESSING SECOND SPLITS



Introduction

Being able to sit in a flat Second Split, or Box Split, is a goal for many dancers; however, many struggle to achieve it. This is one position that the natural anatomical structure of the hips influences range of motion a great deal. If the dancer has deep hip sockets or anteverted hips, they may have some bone on bone restriction that will block their range.

Assessing the current quality and location of the restriction is essential in being able to choose an effective mobiliser to improve range.

Start sitting with the legs in front, and then slowly walk them out to the sides until the first point of restriction. Make sure that they do not push too deeply into range, and instead, look for the first sign of restriction. This may be in one of many different areas, and each one will require a different set of mobilisation techniques to resolve.

Ask the dancer to place their hand over the point of restriction and to describe it. I.e; "Compression in the top of the hip."



POINTS OF RESTRICTION

TOP OF HIP

- Do not push into this
- Often due to compression of tissues
- May be due to capsular thickening
- Head of femur may be sitting high in the socket



PAIN IN THE GROIN

- Do not push into this
- Must be assessed in detail
- Clear Labral pathology
- May be inflammation or degradation in the front of the hip



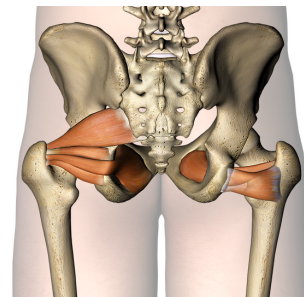
COMPRESSION IN THE BACK OF THE HIP

- Do not push into this
- Often due to thickening of the capsule
- High tone in Deep Rotators may block range
- Common in high level dancers and teachers



COMPRESSION OR PAIN IN THE SACRUM

- Do not push into this
- Often due to compression of SIJ
- Must assess SIJ in detail
- May be instability or immobility



POINTS OF RESTRICTION CONT...

PAIN OR PULLING IN THE INNER KNEE

- Do not push into this
- Often due to irritation of Pes Anserine Bursa
- Related to poor deep hip control
- Overuse of Sartorius, Gracilis or Hamstrings



PULLING IN THE CALF / BELOW THE KNEE

- Do not push into this
- May be neural, especially if in a line of pull
- Check effect of foot position
- Multiple potential points of restriction



MEDIAL HAMSTRINGS

- Do not push into this
- Often due to using hamstrings to stabilise
- May be due to poor gluteal firing
- Static stretching tends to irritate further



UNABLE TO SIT UP STRAIGHT

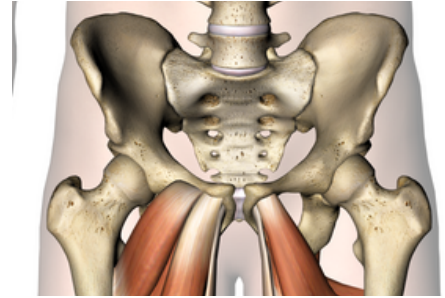
- Indicates poor multifidus
- Check control on yoga block / chair
- Correct spinal posture may alter restriction
- May be instability or immobility



POINTS OF RESTRICTION CONT...

ADDUCTOR INSERTION

- Do not hold on static stretch
- Often related to poor deep hip control
- Check standing transfer
- Check inner thigh endurance



PROXIMAL ADDUCTORS

- May be over-recruiting deep adductors
- Often in those who cross legs frequently
- Check standing and sitting posture
- Often responds well to Aikido Stretch



MIDDLE ADDUCTORS

- Check for recent strong inner thigh work
- Focus training on eccentric control
- Responds well to trigger point releases
- May use static stretch after class



"I JUST DON'T FEEL IT"

- Go back to basic hip assessment
- Especially ER at 90 degrees hip flexion
- May be due to bony restriction
- May also be lack of kinaesthetic awareness



IMPROVING RANGE IN SECOND



The most important thing when it come to attempting to improve range in second is for dancers to actually listen to their body to work out what it needs at any particular point in time, rather than simply running through a set agenda. On different days the point of restriction may be different, which is why understanding what the different restrictions represent is essential.

Once the current tension in one area has been released, it is important to work out why tension is building in that area to avoid the restriction returning.

To learn more about the different kinds of restrictions that will impact flexibility in any area of the body, and the best approach to resolving each one, check out the Level 2 Flexibility Intensive Teacher Training course. This course delves deep into the current understanding and training of flexibility and is ideal for clinicians, teachers and professional dancers alike (18+).

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