

Twists and turns of dancing: Doctors see a steady rise in dance-related injuries

By [Dr. Vikas Mishra](#) on January 06, 2017

While many are joining dance classes for fitness reasons, doctors and trainers warn to follow rules, learn the right moves to avoid acute or severe injuries

Dance can liberate you. While for centuries dancing has been hailed as an effective way to derive a sense of freedom, in contemporary times, dancing has been rediscovered as a way to remain fit.

In no time, dance became synonymous with fitness and the trend has continued till date.

But, the same moves which are touted as fitness exercises for losing weight or as workout sessions, have also unfortunately caused injuries.

Sumitra Pandey (name changed), a 38-year-old Mumbai housewife, is a testimony to the perils of dance.

Pandey had joined dance classes to lose weight, but was resigned to bed rest for four months.

"She had joined zumba classes, which were held for two hours every day, but her body was unable to adjust to the moves. Due to her rigorous dancing, she suffered a slipped disc and had to undergo physiotherapy. She was advised complete bed rest for four months," said [Dr. Vishal Peshattiwar](#), Head of Department of Spine Surgery at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital.

Peshattiwar says Pandey is not an isolated case and they are witnessing a steady rise in number of patients suffering injuries due to dancing.

Doctors opine that people who dance usually suffer from acute injury and chronic injury.

"Knee cap surgery, back and hip injury, ankle and foot injury, slipped disc are the most common injuries seen among dancers," said Dr. Anoop Pispati, Orthopaedic at Jaslok Hospital.

Dance Injuries

Over half of dancers suffer leg, ankle, foot or back injuries. But the right steps can help you stay healthy.

Back Injuries

- Lumbar spine stress fractures

Hip Injuries

- Snapping hip syndrome
- Hip impingement
- Hip flexor tendonitis

Knee and leg injuries

- Patellofemoral pain syndrome
- Stress fracture

Foot and ankle injuries

- Achilles tendonitis
- Trigger toe
- Ankle impingement
- Stress fractures

Bollywood/Rudra
Unique stresses are especially hard on toes and back of the ankle

Hip-Hop & Locking Popping
Due to rigorous foot and hand movement, some may experience ligament tear and muscle pull

Breakdancing
Some experience lower back pain named "breakdance back syndrome"

Illustration: Milind Jadhav

happen later when there is lot of strain on muscles or joint from long-time.

Raina Gagrati, a health fitness specialist, said some injuries are caused when the dancer is not following the right way to move or in cases when body does not allow doing certain activity.

"I teach 'revolution in motion'. It is a New York based exercise started by Dr. Edythe Heus. We use Swiss ball, Bosu ball, slant board and pipes for exercises. This exercise targets tiny muscles, which are ignored while exercising for almost 80% of the time," Gagrati said.

She advised that along with dance, people should also incorporate exercise in their routine to better their moves as well as prevent injuries.

Dance-related injuries are not just a concern for non-performers or those who take up dancing to remain fit, it is also common among professional dancers.



Bollywood choreographer and former judge of TV reality show *Dance India Dance*, Feroz Khan said dance-related injuries are more common in children and youngsters who practice without supervision.

"Nowadays, many children are joining dance classes. Robotics, locking popping, hip-hop are the popular ones. These dance forms involve a lot of technicalities and one must have the correct knowledge to perform them. If not done under proper supervision, it can lead to serious injuries," said Khan.

He added the three most important things to be kept in mind for dancers to avoid injuries are wearing right shoes, regular warm-ups and following the technicalities of the particular dance form accurately.

Renowned choreographer Sandip Soparrkar said warm-up session play crucial role in preventing dance injuries.



Soparrkar, who has suffered from many injuries including a serious knee injury in 2009, has started 'Cool Down exercise' in his dance academy to prevent dance-related injuries.

"I believe precaution is better than suffering and that is the reason why I insist on pre and post exercises along with dance in our academy. We have warm-up exercises and post dance, we do a few routine stretching exercise. Pre and post workout sessions help to relax muscles and are aimed at preventing injuries," said Soparrkar.

A dancer for the last 10 years, Madam Kumar, who represented India and won third place in 2015 at World Salsa Championship in Hong Kong, has also suffered many injuries. Recently, he suffered a [ligament](#) tear and was advised a five month rest.

"I have been dancing and teaching Salsa from many years. I get injured frequently. I fear that someday my injuries may prohibit me from dancing and my career as a dancer may end abruptly. So, for future security, I have started acting as well," said Kumar.