

Welcome to today's webinar

**Safe Dance Practice:
Enhancing Participation**

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29th July 2015

About today's webinar

Today's webinar is scheduled to last for about an hour and will be recorded and made available for download and playback.

You will automatically receive an e-mail containing a link to the recording when it is available.

All microphones and phone lines are muted so we ask that you submit questions by typing them into the question box, located in the lower right-hand corner of your screen and click "send."

We will collect any questions sent throughout the presentation for the presenters and they will answer as many as possible during a Q&A segment at the end of the webinar.

About today's presenters

Collectively today's presenters have 60 years experience in the dance profession as creative artists, teachers and researchers, in educational, recreational, and professional settings.

As graduates of the Masters in Dance Science at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (London), active members of the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS), and key personnel for Safe in Dance International (SiDI), the presenters have an international reputation for advocating for research-informed healthy dance practice.

Their recent publication *Safe Dance Practice: An applied dance science perspective* (published by Human Kinetics) is the culmination of their collective experience researching and applying dance science principles to practice.

Overview

- What is Safe Dance Practice?
- Applications to Practice: Beginning, during and ending the dance session
- Knowing Your Participant: Focus on young and elderly dancers

Before we begin...

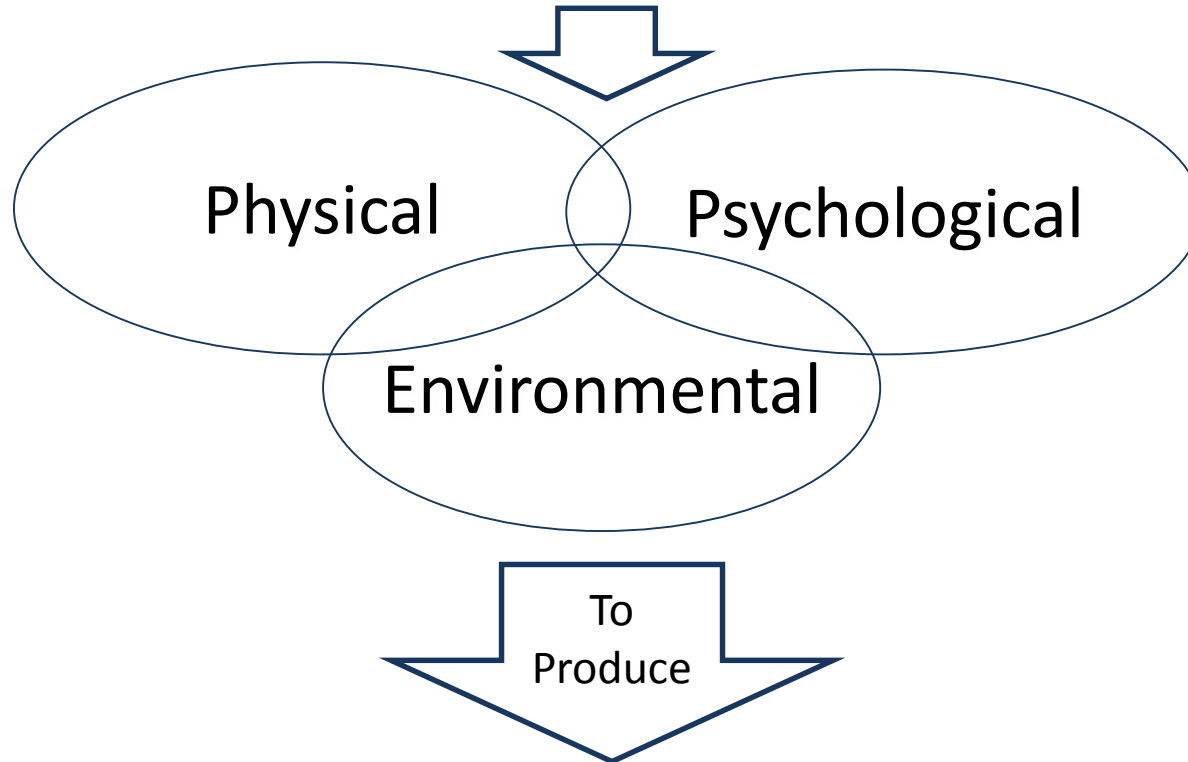
- Let's consider the following frequently asked questions:
 - Who is safe practice for – the dance leader or the dance participants?
 - Is safe practice 'restrictive' or 'freeing'?
 - Who is responsible for ensuring safe dance practice?



WHAT IS SAFE DANCE PRACTICE?

Photograph: Paula Walker
Dancer: Hannah Loakes

Research-informed knowledge and application of key components of the following



- ✓ Injury Reduction
- ✓ Performance Enhancement
- ✓ Longevity of Participation

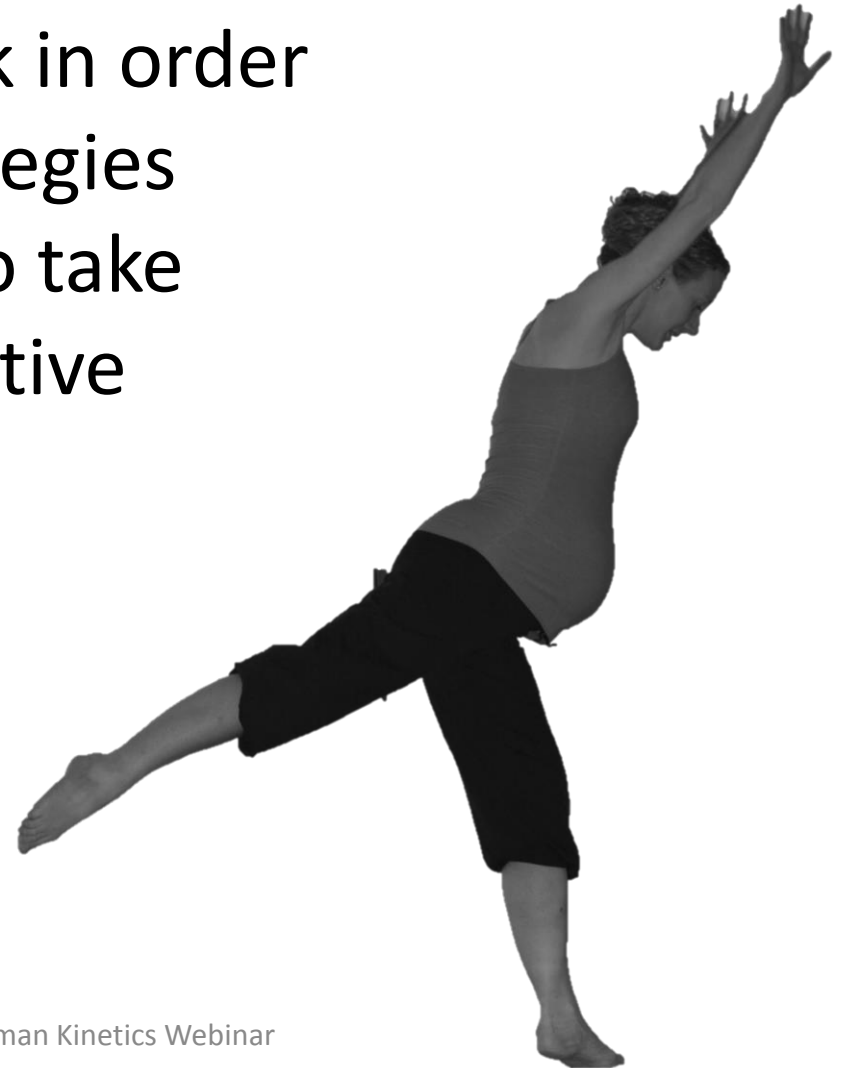
Mission of Safe Dance Practice

- Every dancer regardless of age, experience, ability and style should be able to engage fully in the act of dancing without risk of harm to the body or mind, while also being supported to achieve their full potential.
- Regardless of setting: recreational, educational, vocational, professional

Quin, Rafferty & Tomlinson, 2015, p. xvii

Safe Practice requires...

- An ability to identify risk in order to apply mediating strategies that allow the activity to take place in a safe and effective manner



Photograph: Niamh Morrin
Dancer: Edel Quin (and bump)

The Health & Safety Debate

- While Safe Practice does encompass some legislative requirements, it is MUCH more than this!
- Progressing what is possible....
 - “Truly effective safe practitioners will be able to realistically challenge current physical boundaries and push the potential of both the individual dancer and the art form without negatively affecting the dancer’s wellbeing or the artistic product”

(Quin, Rafferty, Tomlinson, 2015, p xx)

Safe Practice also requires...

- A multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding of the workings of the human body and mind as applied to
 - the individual dancer
 - the specific context or setting
 - the specific genre



Photograph: Edel Quin
Dancer: Peta Blevins

Interrelated Safe Practice Areas

Environmental

- Location
- Flooring
- Temperature
- Ventilation
- Clothing and footwear
- Risks and hazards

Biomechanical

- Anatomical awareness
- Common alignment deviations
- Effects of growth and aging
- Distribution of forces and impact

Physiological

- Effective preparation and recovery
- Effective session progression and sequencing
- Awareness and application of training principles (including rest)

Psychological

- Approaches to creating a positive dance environment
- Tone and intention of feedback
- Tools for maintaining healthy motivation

Legal / Health & Safety

- Insurance
- Policies (e.g. Child Protection Policy)
- Risk Assessments

Injury

- Awareness of risks
- Basic first aid
- Psychological impact

Lifestyle

- Nutrition & Hydration
- Balance of activity and rest

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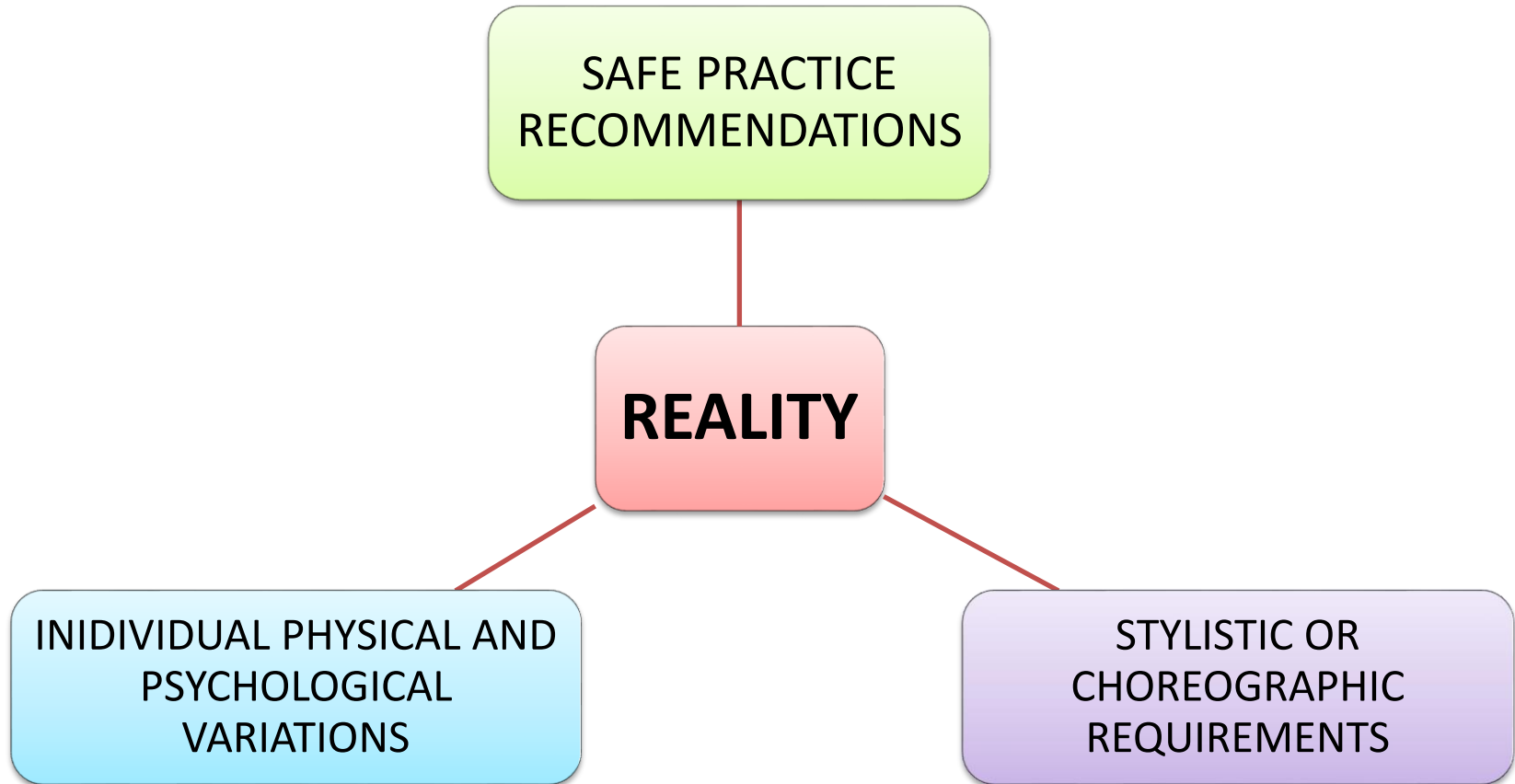
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- Balance of activity and rest

Constant Interplay Between...



(Quin, Rafferty & Tomlinson, 2015, pxix)

Example

- Irish dance – dancing on tip of big toes, with little cushioning or support provided by their dance shoe.
- Ballet – en pointe, with block in toe shoe
- Openly identify potential issues
 - Knowledge of anatomical structures clearly identifies that this body part is not designed to take such physical stresses
- Focus on what safe practice elements can be implemented to mediate against risks
 - Ensure the feet and toe joints are effectively warmed-up and cooled-down
 - Ensure the dance floor is appropriately designed to absorb some of the forces
 - Monitor toe, foot and ankle alignment and tracking, encouraging strength training as appropriate
 - Provide effective anatomical imagery that can aid in maintaining safe and effective technical alignment
 - A series of assessments for gauging pointe readiness should be implemented before progressing to pointe work in ballet

Integrating safe dance practice

With relation to the individual dance session



- Beginning – preparation
- During – consider sequencing and progression (structure, content and delivery)
- Ending – recovery and evaluation
- Context – purpose, practice environment and the participants themselves

Photograph: Matthew Tomkinson
Dancer: Edel Quin

Beginning the dance session

Physical readiness

- Check in with dancers on health/injury status if necessary
- Physiologically prepare the body for activity with warm-up

Initial pulse-raiser

- Increase the heart rate and body temperature
- Low intensity movement to stimulate the CV system

Mobilise joints

- General mobility but not to full joint range of motion
- All major joints to be used in the session

Lengthen muscles

- Gentle dynamic/short static lengthening of large muscles
- Not full extension or to maximum ROM

Address class specific needs

- Introductory minimal style-specific movement patterns
- Mental preparation and focus

Common misconceptions 1



Photograph: Dragan Trifunovic / Fotolia.com

Warm-up means -

- doing some “cardio”
- conditioning or strength exercises.

Misconceptions 2

Warm-up means –

- stretching the body to full range to gain more flexibility
- frequently dancers' preferred and default option!



Photograph: Photoshot/TIPS

Misconceptions 3

Warm-up means –

- style-specific vocabulary taught at the beginning of the class.



Photograph: Xinhua/Photoshot

During the dance session

Sequencing

- How do the activities within the session fit together?
- How does the content, structure and delivery impact on the dancer's practice and learning?

Progression

- A gradual and systematic increase in workload
- Maximises training effects while avoiding overwork and overuse

Planning a safe dance session

Content

- Make sure that the material focuses on the muscle groups to be trained
- Assess the value of repetition to avoid overwork

Structure

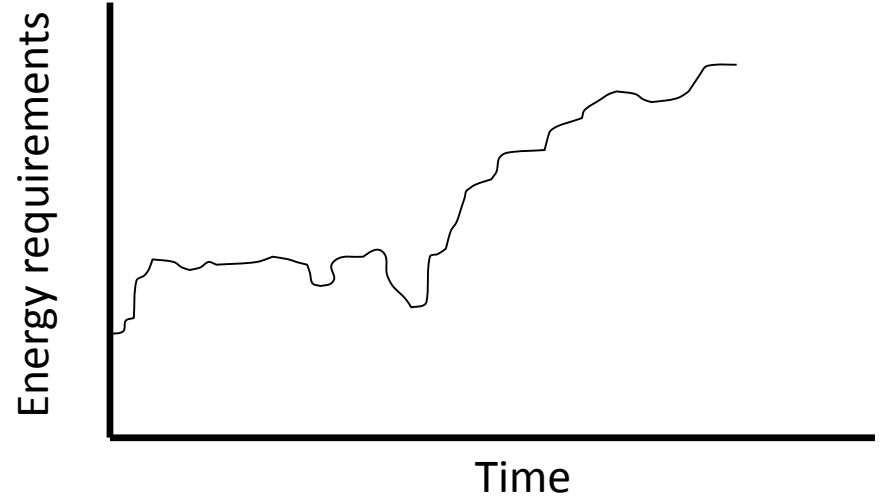
- Consider progression in demand
- Look at pace, speed, difficulty so that the body is not over-stressed

Delivery

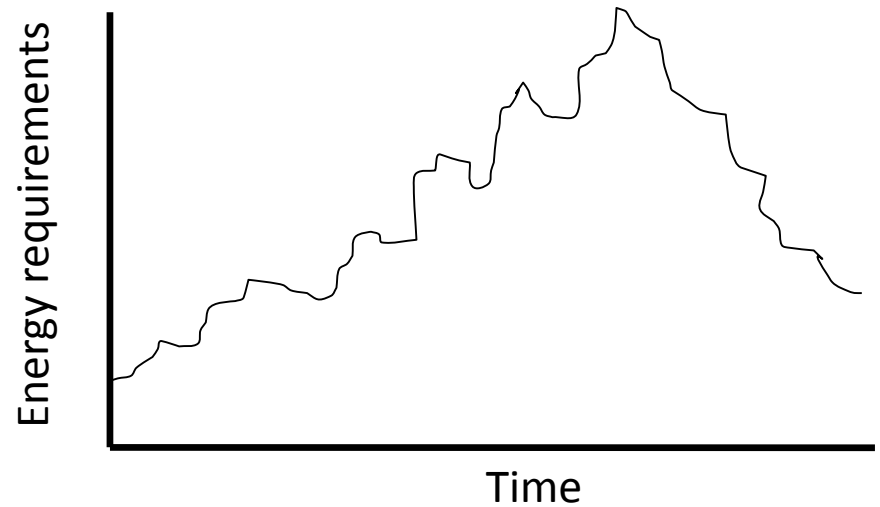
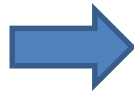
- Link one activity to the next effectively
- Include rest periods

Ending the session

Common practice



Preferred practice



To finish

Gradual reduction

- Ensure the activity does not end abruptly
- Reduce intensity gradually by cooling down

Pulse-reducer

- Allow the heart rate to come down - normalise blood circulation
- Low intensity movement or walking

Ease out the joints

- Gentle mobilisation to ease out tension
- All major joints used in the session

Stretch the muscles

- Controlled and functional muscle lengthening to rebalance muscles stressed during the session
- Static or PNF stretches can be deeper and held longer (up to 1 min)

Recover and evaluate

- Allow the body to recover before further activity, re-fuel and rehydrate
- Evaluate – reflect on application of safe practice principles

The practice context



Photograph: Paula Walker
Dancer: Hakeem Raheem

Remember....

What to include and how to manage the dance session depends on the context:

- the purpose
- the environment
- the unique characteristics (experience, health, age and life stage) of the participants themselves.

Knowing your dancers

- Areas of key importance are: ‘Differentiation between learners, adaptation due to level of ability and physical needs, and overall considerations regarding individual experience, characteristics, and physiological and psychological development’

(Quin, Rafferty & Tomlinson 2015:198)

Our experience

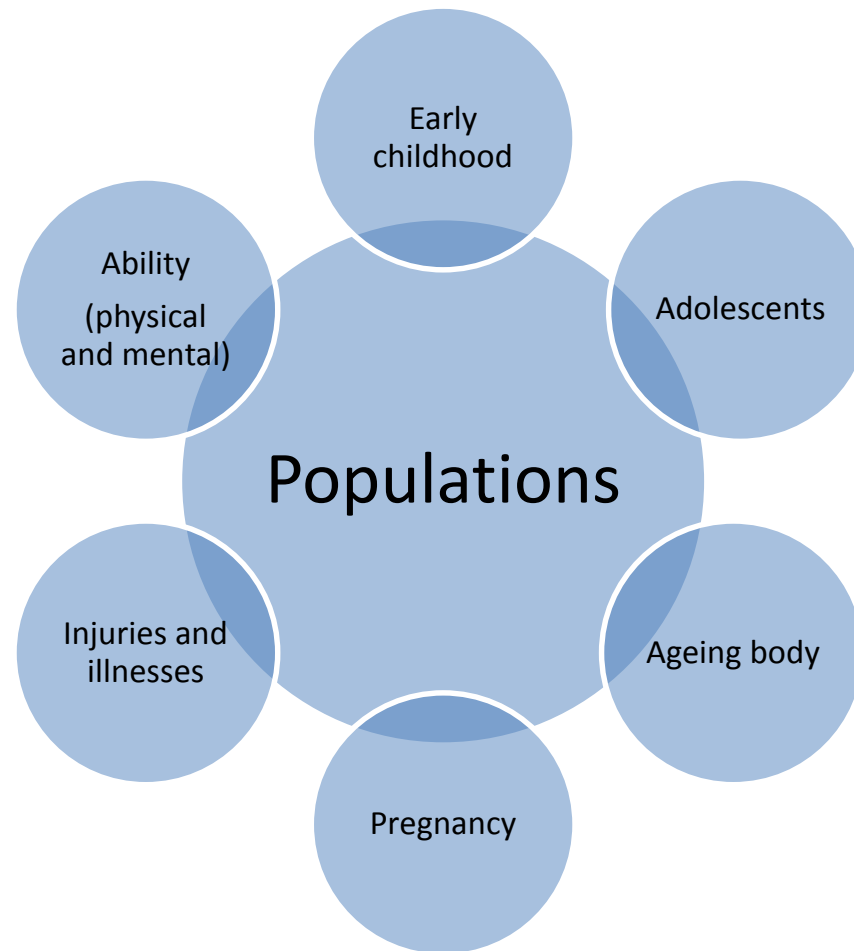
- Putting the theory into practice?



Dancers: Dancers at Trinity Laban UK

Photographer: Sonia Rafferty

Different populations



The young dancer

- 3 stages of growth:
- Early childhood (birth – approximately 8 years old)
- Middle childhood (approximately 8-12 years old)
- Adolescents (approximately 12-18 years old)

Key points for the dance leader

The dance leader should:

- Be responsible for Warm up and Cool down
- Advise on appropriate layers of clothing and hydration
- Vary intensity of exercises with sufficient rest periods
- Assess readiness for progressive activity
- Advise students that negative effects are short term

During growth spurts the dance leader should avoid or adapt:

- Movements that involve direct impacts, such as large jumps and sudden drops to the floor, especially drops, rolls or slides that land directly on the knee
- Unnecessary strain on the knees such as deep plies and turning jumps that risk unstable landing
- Unfamiliar lifts that demand high levels of strength or range of motion
- Deep developmental stretches

Educate the dancer

- Creating a safe *physical* and *psychological* environment is imperative
- The younger population are the future generation of dance leaders



Photographer: ©Thinkstock Images – age fotostock

The older dancer

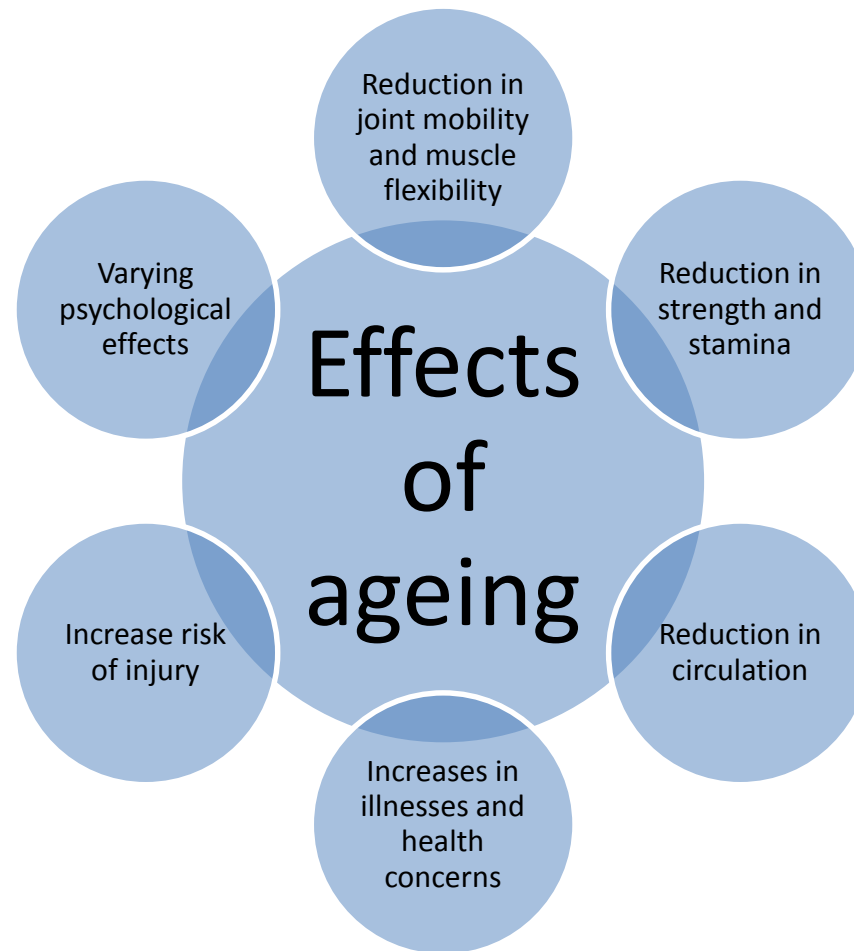
- The rate at which the body ages varies substantially



Dancers: Zumba Gold dance group UK

Photographer: Cheryl Wimperis and Charlotte Tomlinson

The older dancer



Key points for the dance leader

The dance leader should:

- Monitor and discuss changes in health or medical status
- Advise on appropriate clothing and hydration
- Be aware of the increased risk of injury
- Be patient and build physical intensity and creative work gradually
- Plan choreography and adaptations
- Speak clearly, check volume levels with your participants and provide both visual and verbal direction.
- Provide a psychologically supportive environment

The dance leader should potentially avoid or have alternatives for:

- Steps that cross the mid-line of the body
- Turns
- Floor work
- Sudden increases or decreases in intensity
- Movement that requires extreme strength, flexibility or range of motion

Knowing the dancer

- The key principles of Safe Dance Practice apply to any dance setting.
- What to include and how to manage the dance session depends on the purpose, the environment and the participants themselves.
- Personal reflection is key to assessing how well the dance leader met the needs of their participants.



Photographer: Andy Sunbeam

Dancers: Foot in Hand Dance Company

Evaluation

- Reflects on the application of safe practice principles to identify success and benefits as well as highlight aspects that may need further attention.
- Encourages regular updating of knowledge to apply recent research and recommendations in order to ensure that safe practice remains current and responsive.

Applied Dance Science Perspective

- It is easier now more than ever to engage in a research-informed approach to dance practice
- Dance Medicine and Science is a rapidly maturing field of research and applied practice
 - International Association for Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS) www.iadms.org - 25th annual conference, Pittsburgh 2015
 - Master's Degrees in Dance Science, such as at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/dance-science - now in its 15th year
 - Safe in Dance International (SiDI) promoting and recognizing healthy dance practice globally www.safeindance.com - launched January 2014

- Dance participation statistics are showing an increase in participation
- Revival of ethnic and folk styles, fusion of styles to generate new 'hybrid' styles
- Explosion of dance on primetime television

Safe Dance Practice implementation is needed now, perhaps more than ever!

Before we conclude...

- Let's return to the following frequently asked questions:
 - Who is safe practice for – the dance leader or the dance participants?
 - Is safe practice 'restrictive' or 'freeing'?
 - Who's responsibility is it to ensure safe dance practice?

Note Key Text...



Quin, Rafferty, Tomlinson (2015). *Safe Dance Practice. An Applied Dance Science Perspective* Champaign Ill, USA: Human Kinetics

Get a 20% discount off *Safe Dance Practice*, a free eBook version and free shipping by joining HK Rewards at www.humankinetics.com

Book Cover: Photographer, Chris Nash; Dancer, Vanessa Michielon

Any questions?

We have received a number of questions and we will now try and answer as many as possible in the time remaining.

I apologise in advance for any that remain unanswered, but I will forward them to Edel, Sonia and Charlotte and they will try and email you a reply in due course.

Thank you for joining us

Thank you to everyone for joining us today and thanks also to Edel, Sonia and Charlotte for a fascinating and informative presentation.

When your webinar window closes please complete a short survey on today's webinar – we appreciate your feedback as it helps us continually improve our webinars.

We will email everyone a link to the recording of today's presentation, so you can view it yourself or pass it along to friends or colleagues.

I trust you will join us again for future HK webinars and hope you enjoy the rest of your day.

References and related reading

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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US 😊