

Beginners Guide to Stretching



Introduction

This guide has been designed to help anyone; our dancers and non dancers work on improving flexibility. Before stretching please spend 5-7 minutes warming up so the muscles are ready. Warm up can be anything from jogging on the spot, jumping jacks or burpees.

Example Warm Up

Pick your favourite song

Every time there is a *verse* - jog on the spot

Every time there is a *chorus* - jumping jacks

Ok now we are warm lets stretch!

Flexibility is defined as a joints ability to move freely through a full and normal range of movement also known as ROM.



There are **3** types of stretching:

Static - passive stretching where a stretch is held in a specific location for a certain length of time

Dynamic Ballistic/Bouncing Stretches - this involves little 'bounces' to help you get further for example leaning to touch your toes adding a little pulses forward to go beyond

PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation) - We find this one to be the most beneficial can work with a partner or on your own depending on the exercise. It is a great way to create more flexibility. The muscle groups are put through a routine of stretching and contracting.

Straddle

1. Sit with your legs as far open as you can with knees pointing up and toes pointing out. How wide can you get your legs?
2. Breathe in, reach up to the ceiling and reach forward. Can you get your tummy on the floor? If you can how long can you hold it for?

ADVANCED – sit with your legs wide against a wall, as wide as you can. Now without moving, push your feet/legs into the wall for 10 secs. Then relax and bring yourself a little closer to the wall. Repeat this 3x. This is a PNF stretch.



Swan/Pigeon Pose

1. Sit with your legs at 90/90 degrees to the right side, keep the left toe in line with the knee, roll onto your right hip
2. Almost in a scissor splits position but one leg is bent it. Walk your hands down onto the floor so chest and arms are on the floor. Repeat this on the opposite leg

ADVANCED

Walk the hands back in and pick up the back leg. this is fantastic for stretching your quad (front of the leg). If you went even MORE you can mermaid pose.

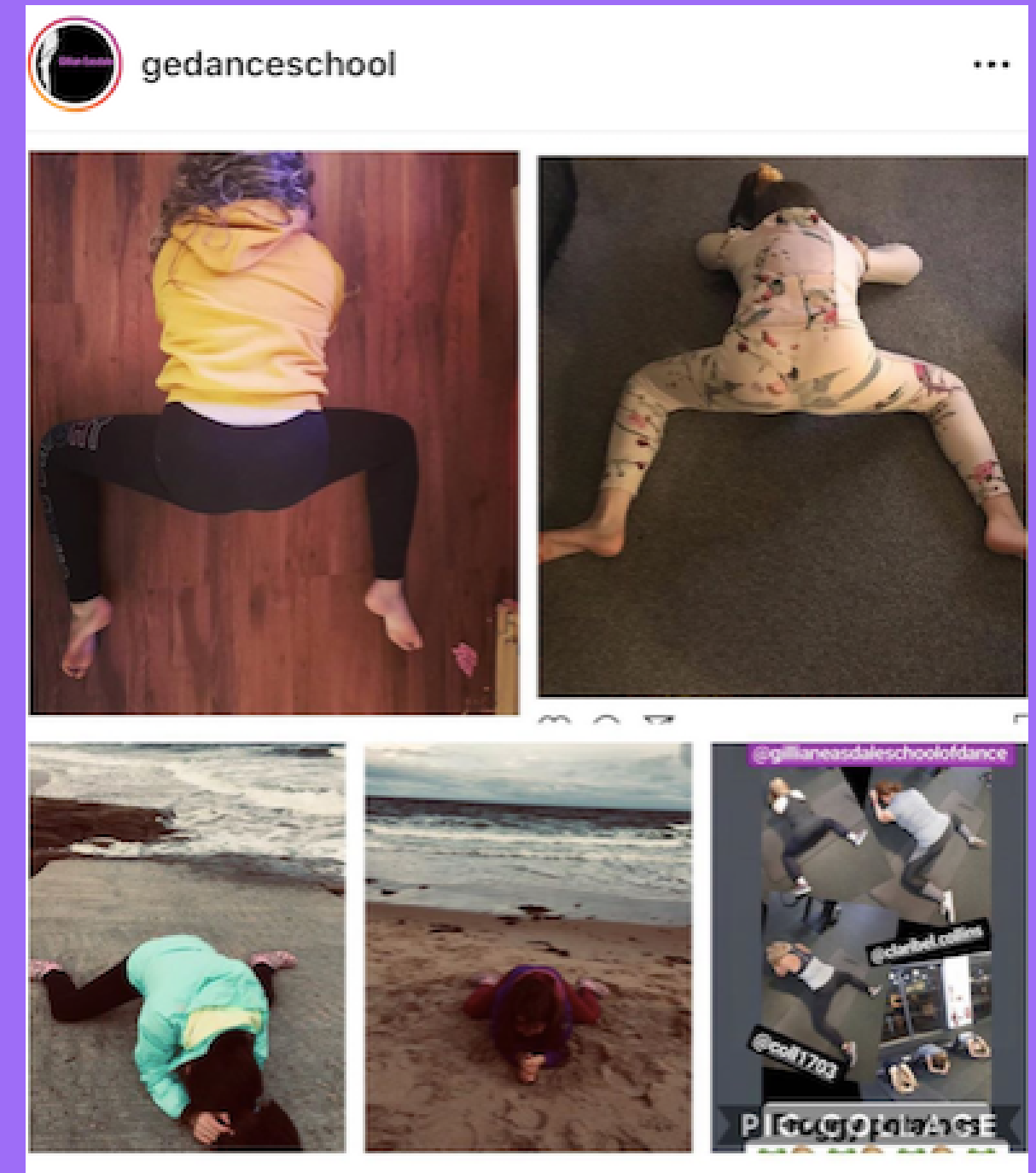


More hip stretches you say?

Frog Pose!

Belly button up off the floor, spine in a flat position and knees out in line with toes.

ADVANCED – push your knees into the floor for 10 seconds, then relax. Take your knees a little wider. Repeat 3x



Pike

1. Sitting tall with your legs straight out in front of you. Breathe in and reach up to the ceiling, breathe out, lean forward towards your toes. Aim is to get your head on your knees, chest on your legs and hands round your feet.
2. You can practise this one standing or sitting.



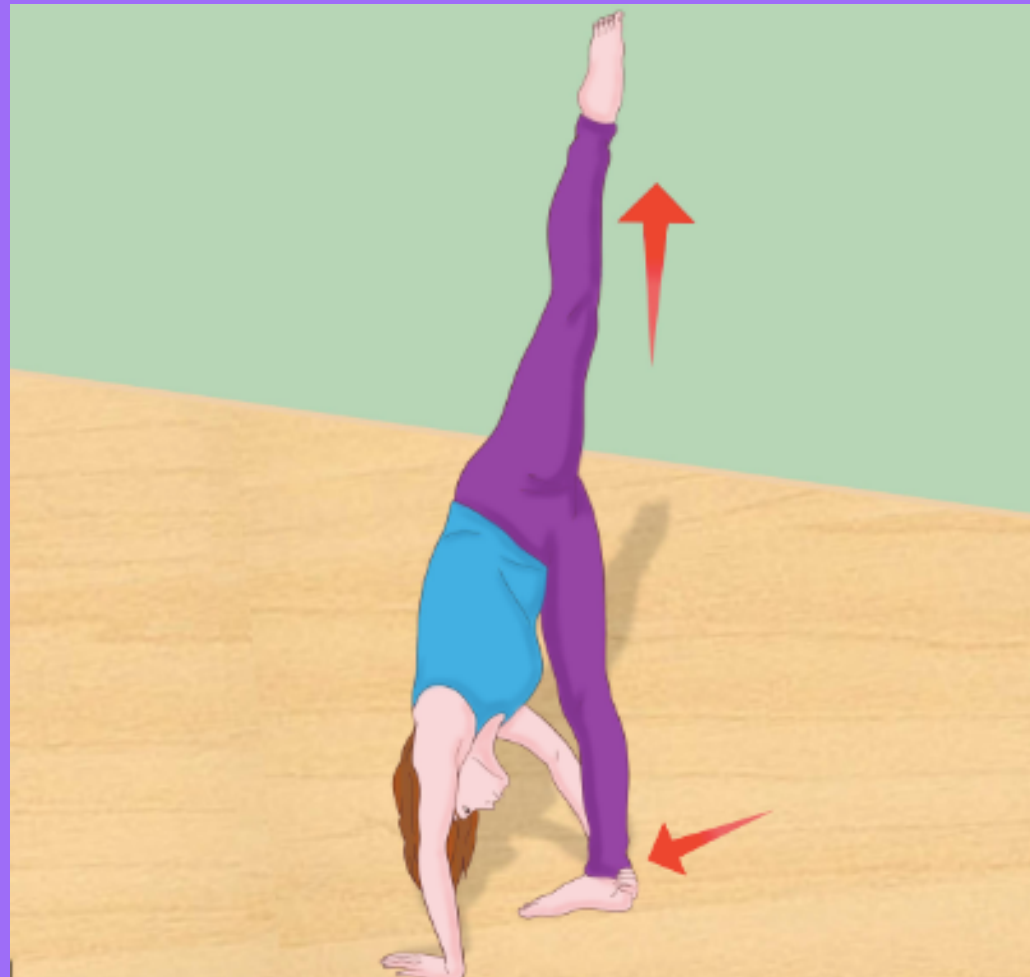
ADVANCED

1. Lie on the floor or stand with back against a wall. (if you are standing make sure feet are parallel and not facing out)
2. Either pull your leg towards your chest (holding on above or below the knee), or ask a partner to help you.
3. Standing partner holds onto lying partners foot. Partner on the floor pushes foot into standing partners hand for 10 seconds. After this release and push their leg forward a little.

Repeat this 3x



**If you have done the
previous steps and would
like more follow on**



Standing Split
Practise splits against a wall

Practise Front and Back
Kicks

Practise all 3 splits right, left
and box. Try to get a little
further each time!

HAPPY CAT ANGRY CAT

This stretch is FANTASTIC for improving back flexibility and mobility.

1. Imagine pulling your belly button into your spine (angry cat)
2. Stick your bottom out and arch your spine (happy cat)

ADVANCED

Lay down on the floor with chest to the floor.

Reach your hands out in front of you.

Partner will take your hands and gently lift you shoulders and chest off the floor. Hips Stay on the floor. Repeat this 10x slow



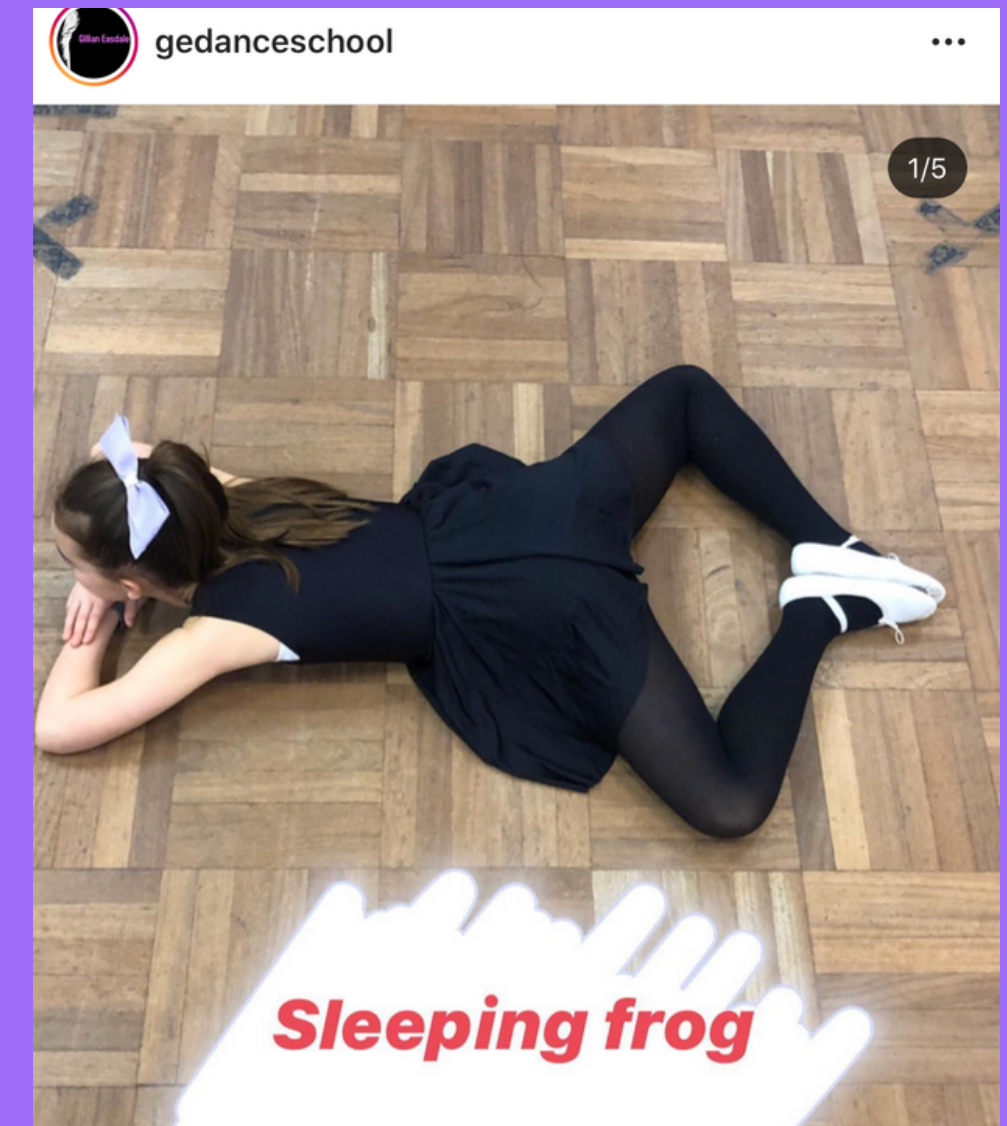
We could write a book on stretching but these are just some of the main ones we use at Gillian Easdale School of Dance.

Some of our other favourites are:

Downward Dog



Standing Mermaid



AWESOME WORK!

Thank you for downloading and happy stretching!

We hope you were able to improve your flexibility. Remember consistency is key! The more you practise the better you become.

If you have taken anything from this guide it would mean a lot to me if you could share it on social media.

Facebook– Gillian Easdale School of Dance

Instagram – gillianeasdaledanceschool