

Exercises

We recommend doing the following exercises in preparation for dancing at THRIVE.

Stretch slowly, carefully, and gently, just until the muscle is taut. Do not make any jerky movements or stretch to the point of discomfort!



Rotate each foot 5 times clockwise and 5 times counter-clockwise with your foot off the floor, making the widest circles you can make.



Stand naturally and then step forward with your left foot. Bend your knees, keeping your heels on the floor. Concentrate on your right calf: bend your right knee as much as you can while still keeping the heel on the floor. Hold for 15 seconds. Stretch the left calf and Achilles tendon similarly, this time stepping forward with your right foot, bending your knees and focusing on bending the left knee as much as you can while still keeping the heel on the floor. Hold for 15 seconds.



Stand naturally and step forward one shoe length with your right foot. Reach toward the floor as far as you can go, keeping your right leg straight and bending your left knee somewhat. Hold for 15 seconds. Then step forward so that your left foot is one shoe length in front of your right foot. Reach down as far as you can, keeping your left leg straight and bending your right knee somewhat. Hold for 15 seconds. This stretches your hamstrings and prepares your outer knee for turns.



Steadying yourself by holding onto a piece of furniture with your left hand, bend your right knee as much as you comfortably are able, until you can hold your right toe with your right hand. Being wary not to overstress your knee, rotate the right leg at the hip until the knee is pointing toward the floor, if possible, or beyond that and parallel with the ceiling, if you can. Stop when the right thigh and the front of the right hip are taut. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat with the left leg.



Stand with your feet together. Reach your arms straight above your head. Grab your right hand with your left. Keeping your arms straight, bend to the left at the torso while pulling left on your right hand. Bend and pull until your right torso and lateral muscles are taut. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat for your left torso, pulling your left hand with your right.



Stand with your feet as far apart as you comfortably can place them. Reach with your right arm down and to the left as far as you can. Hold for 15 seconds. Still standing in that position, reach with your left arm down and to the right as far as you can. Hold for 15 seconds. This stretches your back and the muscles inside your quadriceps.



With your elbows and forearms lifted at shoulder height, smoothly swing your upper body around clockwise and then counter-clockwise, keeping your torso very relaxed. Repeat this several times without pausing. This prepares your back and torso for various dance moves.



Keeping your arms straight and at shoulder height, swing them smoothly forward and across one another as far as you can go, and then back as far as you can go, keeping your shoulders very relaxed. Repeat several times without pausing.

LAST EXERCISE: Keeping your right arm straight, smoothly swing it in several vertical circles, first in one direction and then in the opposite direction. Keep your shoulder fully relaxed as you do this. Repeat with your left arm.