

American Ballet Theatre's National Training Curriculum Training Guidelines

10 Principals of Classical Ballet

We believe the following basic principals are implicit in all levels of training. ABT's National Training Curriculum seeks to train a young dancer to work anatomically correct and to have a clean and simple approach with an acute eye for stylistic and technical detail.

1. Correct Posture: with correct posture the bones are aligned in order that there is the least muscular effort to be upright; with the weight fully over one or two feet; the waist is held to engage the muscular corset, thus strengthening the postural muscles in the pelvis, stomach, and upper torso.

2. Turn-out: is a rotation of the legs at the hip - joints with no twisting of the pelvis, knees, and ankles; with correct posture, control of the spinal muscles is emphasized; with turn-out there is added use of the inner and outer and buttocks muscles; to attain turn-out in high leg positions it is necessary to have sufficient stretch, i.e. a straddle split.

3. Placements: a dancer is placed when correct posture and turn-out are maintained while moving the limbs and the natural articulation of the leg at its joints is not disordered.

4. Central Line of Balance: is when the weight of the body is centered over one or two feet while still, and is motion by also using natural opposition and Epaulement; the head, one of the heaviest parts of the body, should move to maintain the central line of balance and generally leads the movements: balance is sustained while maintaining correct posture, turn-out, and placements.

5. Transferring Weight: the use of a downward circle as in chaise (which glides with the entire surface of the soul of the foot on the floor), the use of a pointed foot as in temps lie, or the use of an upward circle as in assemble elance are some examples of the different ways of transferring weight; this gives movement's texture and variety; weight must always be transferred through the central line of balance, while maintaining correct posture, turn-out, and placements.

6. Heels in Demi-plie and Grand plie: heels must be kept down while executing demi-plie in the five positions of the feet and in grand plie in 2nd and open 4th positions; the heels are allowed to lift in grand plie in 1st, 3rd, crossed 4th and 5th positions; correct use of demi-plie and avoiding rolling of the arches, twisting the knees, or gripping the toes and bottom of the feet prevent unnecessary strain on the joints.

7. Pirouette Preparation: the use of the traditional rounded arm position for the preparation of all pirouettes is required; students will learn alternate styles the senior year of training.

8. Port de Bras: natural arm coordination and the principles of classical port de bras must be understood and applied: this will develop stylistic sensibility

9. Musicality: the dancer must have a clear understanding of rhythm, quality, and phrasing to enhance the application of coordinated movement, technique, style, and artistry.

10. Corridantions: natural coordination is fine tuned by adhering to the above principals: and complex coordination is developed when movements are learned at a comfortable pace so that students can execute new vocabulary with relative ease, devoid of mannerisms and without risking unnecessary injury.