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Adrienne Warber Grand Rapids Ballet Examiner

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I just try to bring two worlds together, something old and something new, because those are the two worlds I grew up with.



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August 6, 2014 12:37 AM MST



You can study ballet at any fitness level. Photo by Daniel Berehulski/Getty Images

Can you learn ballet if you are an adult with limited flexibility? Yes, you can learn ballet at any age and any level of flexibility.

Learning Ballet with Physical Limitations

Before you start any new sport or exercise, you should consult your doctor to make sure you are healthy enough to participate in that particular type of physical activity.

Lack of flexibility may not be a medical condition, but it does physically limit how you perform some of the ballet exercises.

How to Keep Up in Ballet Class

When people think of ballet, they don't always realize how much energy and strength it takes to dance.

The best way to keep up in class when you start getting fatigued is to listen to your body.

Also, remember not to compare yourself to other classmates.

Choose your adult ballet class carefully. Some classes are mainly barre workout classes, while others are ballet technique classes.

Ways to Increase Flexibility

The ballet steps and exercises you learn in ballet class will increase your flexibility over time.

The following activities can increase flexibility over time:

- Stretching: Stretch before and after class to warm up and then, cool down muscles.
Pliés: Do basic demi and grand plié exercises at home.
Barre exercises: Practice the barre exercises that you cover in ballet class at home.
Tendus and dégagés: Practice doing tendu and dégagé exercises both slow and fast.
Relevés and élevés: To strengthen your feet and increase foot flexibility, practice sets of relevés and élevés at home.
Port de bras: Use port de bras (movement of arms) when you practice ballet foot movements.
Foot exercise: Do point and flex foot exercises.

Progressing in Ballet with Limited Flexibility

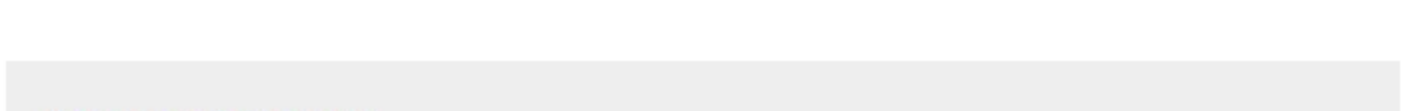
Even with limited to no flexibility, you can still progress in ballet. It may take longer to reach certain ballet technique goals.

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- Adult ballet: Begin ballet as an adult
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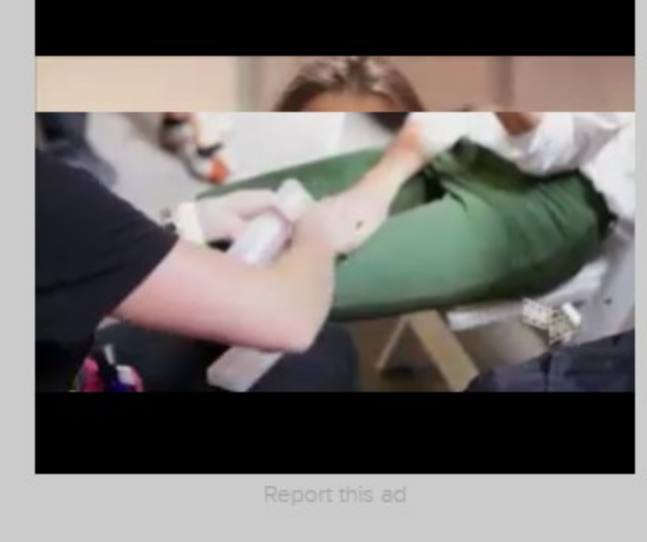
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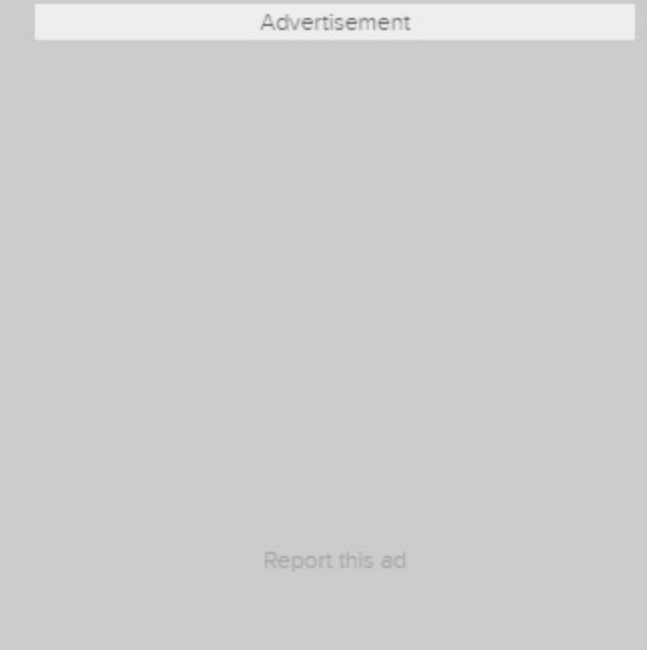
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