Controlling balance: Static and dynamic balance within dance populations

Frances A. Clarke¹-², Matt Wyon²-³, and Sally Percival¹

¹ Department of Dance, University of Wolverhampton, UK
² Research Centre for Sport, Exercise, and Performance, University of Wolverhampton, UK
³ National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science, UK

All dance genres demand a high level of control in static and dynamic balance, but there is little published research on balance in the dance field. Previous research on dancers’ balance abilities has relied on tests such as the Star Excursion Balance Test (SEBT), Y Balance Test, a modified SEBT (mSEBT), a modified Romberg test, and the Airplane test. This study has assessed the validity of existing balance tests for dancers with particular reference to the relevance of static versus dynamic balance. Eighty-five female dance undergraduates were recruited for balance tests using the Star Excursion Balance Test (SEBT), the Y Balance Test, the modified Romberg test, the Airplane test, the BioSway Balance System (Biodex, USA), and the dance-specific pirouette test. No correlation was found between the types of balance tests, and the variables helping to determine one test did not necessarily help to determine the other tests. Previously, the balance and stability tests have been employed during screening of dancers with low to moderate success in predicting injury. The present study challenges the validity of these tests in relation to dance relevant skills and points toward the need to develop dance-specific tests.

Keywords: balance tests; static balance; dynamic balance; dancers; performance

Acknowledgments

The travel cost of this project was supported by the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund.
Address for correspondence

Frances A. Clarke, Department of Dance, University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, Walsall WS1 3BD, UK; Email: frances.clarke@wlv.ac.uk