

## Book Notes

### **Dancing Longer, Dancing Stronger: A Guide To Improving Technique and Preventing Injury**

by Andrea Watkins and Priscilla Clarkson  
Princeton Book Publishers, Princeton, New Jersey  
Publication Date: June 1990  
ISBN 0-916622-96-3

*Dancing Longer, Dancing Stronger* is a sophisticated volume. While the basics of conditioning and general principles of injury prevention are presented, it covers a significant amount of material beyond the introductory level. The book is clearly geared for an audience that is body literate and comfortable with dance science terminology. The groundwork of anatomy and kinesiology is established and then the text moves quickly to the exercise program. It is divided into the following sections:

Before You Begin: How to Use this Book, The Purpose of Strength and Flexibility Conditioning, Conditioning for Strength, Conditioning for Flexibility, and Basic Information

How to Perform the Exercises; Exercise Equipment, Strength Conditioning Exercises, Flexibility Exercises, and Starting Positions

The Foot, Ankle and Lower Leg; The Knee, Upper Leg and Hip; The Trunk and Neck; The Shoulder and Arm

Each chapter follows the format of introduction, questions and answers, and appropriate exercises. The final chapter is Putting It All Together.

Many chapters are barely two pages, which does cover the material succinctly but leaves a choppy feel to the piece. The question and answer section is a useful strategy for personalizing the subject but in this book would profit from more detailed responses.

The selection criteria for the exercises presented in each chapter are clearly articulated in the introduction: exercises had to be simple enough to be taught by written description; exercises had to be performable without the assistance of a partner; and any equipment required had to be easily obtained. Although these criteria are not likely to receive universal acceptance, they are reasonable given the intention of the authors. There is an incongruity, however, between the professional tone of the book and make-it-yourself exercise equipment. The authors suggest that easily obtainable equipment implies "no purchase necessary."

The most controversial aspect of the book is not the particular set of exercises postulated, but rather the assumptions about the process of diagnosing the need for the exercises. The kind of personal assessment of strength and flexibility as well as habits in technique that contribute to dance injury are "advanced" skills in perception and analysis. At one point the authors recommend going to the teacher for advice in this area, which can be helpful unless

the teacher is the source of the technical problem. That message, coupled with a disclaimer that this volume is not intended for the injured dancer, does not go far enough in addressing a serious problem in the field. Beginning dancers and professionals should be encouraged to seek professional help in assessing their problems and in creating a personal conditioning or rehabilitation program.

This book is a very valuable resource to be added to the growing fields of dance science and dance medicine, but the self-help approach should not be a substitute for other professional resources, especially when there is a pattern of injury or pain.

### **A Complete Guide to Nutrition and Weight Control**

Robin D. Chmelar and Sally S. Fitt  
Princeton Book Publishers/Dance Horizons, Princeton, New Jersey  
Publication Date: May 1990  
ISBN 0-916622-89-4

This volume introduces the new series, *Dancing At Your Peak*. If it is indicative of the caliber of research and writing for the series, then this will truly be a much welcomed addition to dance and dance medicine libraries.

The authors have exceptional knowledge of dance science which is evident throughout the book. It is a slim volume with one consistent message carefully developed through each chapter: Diet, Weight Loss and Dancers, Foundations of Weight Control for Dancers, Body Composition, Overview of Nutrients, Caloric and Nutrient Intake in Dancers, Understanding the Exercise Demands of Dance, Dietary Guidelines to Promote Fat Loss, Guidelines on Endurance Exercise to Burn Fat, Psychological Factors and Eating Disorders, Associated Factors Affecting Weight Control, and Appendices. The introduction is effective in establishing the authors' point of view. "Most of the material in this book is based on the scientifically established work of nutritionists, exercise physiologists and physicians, primarily research studies done on professional, university, and adolescent dancers. However, we have also tried to address certain areas that we have found to be of concern to dancers even though they might not fit into the traditional views of the above specialties. Some nutritionists may feel we have gone too far in our recommendations, while some dancers may feel we have not gone far enough, but such is the nature of the beast."

They present the history of the problem and an insightful review of existing research. They have clearly realized their goal of bringing current research findings to the lay reader as well as bringing their message to the medical community. The presentation of information is straightforward and intelligible for those not well versed in dance science. The

myths and realities of dance and weight loss are revealed. Nutritionists and physicians should profit from the information on dance exercise. Beyond hereditary factors, many have wondered why dance does not promote weight loss. Perhaps the most significant contribution is the central theme of the book, which is the notion of controlling body composition rather than focusing strictly on weight control. The process for achieving a body appropriate for dance is addressed. The relationship of psychological factors to physiological factors is sensitively discussed and a brief overview of eating disorders is provided. The supplementary charts

and graphs are well presented as are the meal plans. This volume should be required reading for anyone involved in dance education as well as those who work with dancers clinically.

Both books reviewed by  
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