Power moves

Dancers use strength and agility to make midair splits and elaborate lifts look effortless. Take it from these pros, who’ve mastered everything from ballet to break dancing, then try our flexibility workout to feel long and limber. BY ELYSE ROTH

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BLAIR GETZ MEZIBOV
STYLED BY GRO CURTIS
The workout

Choreographer and personal trainer Isaac Calpito—who staged the dancers’ beautiful poses for this shoot—shares his ultimate stretch routine. Try these moves after cardio three to five times a week to improve your flexibility and range of motion.

**HIP OPENER** Lie faceup with legs pressed against a wall from glutes to heels. Keep feet flexed as you slowly open legs along wall until you feel a stretch. Hold 60 seconds, then bring legs together for 1 rep. Do 4 reps.

**DEEP LUNGE** Start on all fours. With left knee directly under left hip, step right foot forward, right knee bent 90 degrees. Hold 30 seconds, then switch sides; repeat for 1 rep. Do 4 reps. (For a deeper stretch, grasp back foot and slowly pull it toward glute.)

**LOWER-BODY HUG** Stand with feet just wider than hip-width apart, toes forward. Reach arms to ceiling, then bend at hips, folding over as far as you comfortably can, bringing chest to thighs. Hold backs of ankles and straighten spine, letting neck and head drop toward floor and shifting weight to toes. Hold 30 seconds, then slowly return to start for 1 rep. Do 4 reps.

**THREAD THE NEEDLE** Start on all fours. With core engaged, reach right hand under left arm until right shoulder is against ground, arm straight. Hold 30 seconds, reaching as far as you can. Slowly return to start. Switch sides; repeat for 1 rep. Do 4 reps.

**HEEL DROP** Stand with feet hip-width apart, facing a step about 36 inches away. Place ball of right foot on edge of step. Gently straighten right leg as right heel drops to floor. Hold 30 seconds. Switch sides; repeat for 1 rep. Do 4 reps.

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FOOTLOOSE

“Footloose can be hard on the legs if you hold positions or repeat motions like we do in rehearsals, so I’m always stretching my muscles and strengthening legs and feet,” says ballet dancer Tessa Tutu. (Opposite, left: Red Boot Booty Express, red shorts from open toy burlesque, $295.)
CUT TO MOVE

"When you love what you're doing, it makes you want to do exciting things," said Pruitt. "I felt great, I'm going to dance great."

TOP LEFT: Delancy, BFC OFF-TRACK TOP RIGHT: Delancy, BFC OFF-TRACK BODY 

BODYRIGHT: Zane, BFC SHORT SLEEVE, Leatherette $1,050 TOP Boys and Girls, $650 

Red Suede: Zane, BFC

MARDIA BOODOO, 24, decided she wanted to dance ballet professionally at age 14—so she woke up at 5 a.m. to train before school. "It's so hard to make it. You have to fight for your place," she says.

ADRIENNE CANTERNA, 33, was a ballerina before starting the mixed-gender group Bad Boys of Ballet. "Combining styles is exciting. Everyone gets to show off different talents," she says.

KYLE LUCIA, 22, strength trains daily for the Rink and breaks dancing his performances on tour with Bad Boys of Ballet. "I have to be a dancer," he says. "Combining styles is exciting. Everyone gets to show off different talents," she says.

JACOBY PRUITT, 21, took dance in middle school to get out of PE, and it stuck. Then in college, when he saw Ailey, he performed in different groups. "I love to be a dancer," he says. "Combining styles is exciting. Everyone gets to show off different talents," she says.

KEVIN TATE, 26, started as a kid dancer but now leads many different groups. "I love to be a dancer," he says. "Combining styles is exciting. Everyone gets to show off different talents," she says.

NADIA WHIPPLE, 27, always dreamed of being a ballerina. Her first exposure was at the Kansas City Ballet Studio, where her mother worked. "I started at age 10," she says. "I never looked back."

From left: Whinney, Tate, Lucas, Choreographer Isaac Cigliano, Canterna, Pruitt, and Boodoo.