

2026 Dance Technique List

Proper dance technique should be considered when choreographing your piece. Play to your own strengths and use this list as a baseline to help guide and challenge yourself technically. Your routine is not limited to the list below.

Dancers should exemplify good posture and will be critiqued for their use of proper body alignment throughout their pieces.

Proper Body Alignment

- Lifted chin, elongated neck, eyes off the floor
- Shoulders pressed naturally down and back
- Rib cage closed, as if there was a safety pin holding it together
- Hips and pelvis are not thrusting forward or backward but centered under your spine.
- Purposeful angles and straight lines – no bent wrists/sickled ankles. If you make an angle (an attitude turn, etc.) be clean and purposeful. Otherwise, make sure lines are long and unbroken.

Turns

Chainé Turn – a two-step turn where dancers stand in second and rotate 180 degree with each step. Think of creating a chain link with your body as the turns continue across the floor. Be sure to spot in the direction you are heading!

Pirouette - a complete rotation done in place with the standing leg en releve, while the other leg is in passe with the foot resting at the ankle, calf, or knee.

Pique Turn - Dancer steps directly onto releve on one foot (without a plie' on the standing leg), and a complete rotation is made.

Barrel Turn- A pirouette characterized by using the arms in a windmill or airplane position. The body is inclined or arched as opposed to upright. The raised leg on the turn can be done parallel, turned out, or turned in. The windmill action of the arms and use of the back motivate the turn action.

Leaps and Jumps

Sauté- a jump from two feet, returning to two feet. Can be performed in 1st, 2nd, or 5th position, or alternate between them.

Jeté- It is a jump from one foot to the other in which the working leg is brushed into the air and appears to be thrown.

Tour Jeté- A movement in which a dancer leaps from one foot, makes a half turn in the air and lands on the other foot.

Calypso Leap- A turning dance leap in which the working leg is brushed and held straight, while the back leg is held in the attitude position.

Miscellaneous

Kick Ball Change - one foot kicks outward (either forward, to the side or to the back) and then is brought behind for a ball change step.

Pas de Bourrée - a 3-step-move in which foot A crosses behind foot B, then foot B steps to the side, and then foot A steps forward (back, side, front). Performed to travel across the stage as well as a preparation step for turns, arabesques, and jumps.

Grapevine - a dancer steps out to the side, crosses the other foot in front, steps out to side again, and crosses the other foot behind.

Chassé- “Chasing one foot with the other”. The leading foot slides forward into fourth (or to the side into second), then with a spring off the floor, the standing limb draws up to meet it in the air, and the leading foot opens to land in fourth (or second). Used as a traveling or transition step. (Also seen as a “gallop”)

Tendué – with proper alignment and squared hips, one foot *stretches* outward to the front/back/or side and points the toe, being sure to never lose connection with the floor.

Dégagé- begins like a tendué, but then *disengages* from the floor to an extended lift.

Grand Battement- moving through a tendué and degage, the grand battement continues to a full extension of the leg to the front, side, or back and from first or fifth.

Transitions

Dancers will be critiqued on their ability to utilize the entire stage as well as demonstrate cleanliness and creativity in combining various techniques.