



Is It Worth It To Take Dance Classes Online?

As we look towards fall, conversations around the dinner table are sure to include the topic of dance. Students and families are questioning whether or not it's worth it to take dance classes online. I'm sure we are all feeling like this lockdown is going to last forever. Please remember that this isolation is TEMPORARY!!! Even if it lasts one more month or one more year, it's temporary. We are hoping to provide some insight to help better understand this complex question with some Q&A.

WE WILL DANCE TOGETHER AGAIN <3

What are some of the benefits from taking class online?

- One of the biggest challenges right now is feeling disconnected from one another. Dance isn't just about technique but it's also about offering community. It's more important now, more than ever, to maintain our sense of community. No, it's not ideal but we are better off connecting virtually than not at all.
- With so many unknowns surrounding COVID-19, dance can offer the routine that the mind and body need so badly right now. Dance is something that grounds us - mentally - physically - emotionally - during challenging times, even if it's in an unorthodox way. The routine of class reaches beyond a physical space. Class itself is home. It is a place where you can let go of outside stress, find peace in your brain and be present in your body to focus on your passion, your craft, your sport, your art. By being present in mind, body and heart, we can let go of the outside world and heal ourselves through movement.
- Students benefit mentally and emotionally by being connected to their friends and their teachers. We are physically distanced but we cannot be emotionally distant!
- Exercise makes us happier human beings! It's great for increasing energy, giving us better sleep (also a challenge right now!) and helps instill healthy self-care habits for life. Bodies need to move, especially after sitting down for school all day long!
- Setting goals is imperative to progress. Don't let challenges defeat you. Keep your eyes firmly fixed on your goals. Keep working to pass that pointe test, keep working to improve with every class, keep striving to challenge yourselves, keep building your

proprioception. You'll be so glad that you found the strength to not only maintain and persevere but to dig in deep and come out of this even stronger.

- You have the ability to work through ideas while they're still fresh! Usually we need to rush out of the studio after class and we often forget to revisit feedback once we're home. Taking class online offers more space to self-reflect while you are still in a class mentality can be hugely helpful!! Following your discoveries up with journaling helps changes stick.
- Proprioception! Don't know what this skill is? Look it up! You are improving this all-important skill now more than you did during in-person classes!
- Picking up combinations better is something we've seen our students flourishing with! You have to solely rely on yourself to know the combinations, there aren't others to follow.

Can I still progress by taking class online?

- In dance we recognize that our training is a never-ending journey. There is ALWAYS something to learn, there is ALWAYS progress to be made. Professional dancers still work every day to improve upon the complexity of a simple plié. We know that we are given corrections from our teachers even during tendus - relish in refining your technique and the rest of it will bloom!

But what about things like turns and jumps that we “can’t” do while training at home?

- Be careful of the word “can’t” because it sets up your brain to believe that you are unable to make progress. You'll be defeated before you even try. Change your frame of mind and focus on what you *can* do.
- This is the time to ask questions like “why do I keep falling out of my pirouettes?” and hone in on the components that make up the pirouette. Think about a pirouette (or a jump) like a jigsaw puzzle, we need all of the pieces to make the final picture. We can focus on each individual piece, we can put sections of the puzzle together. If each of the pieces get stronger and stronger, can you imagine the change you'll see in your pirouettes?!
- Make new connections - think about all the things we do at the barre to help prepare for jumps, waltzes, pirouettes and approach it with a similar frame of mind. Everything we do at the barre prepares you for more complex movement. Take advantage of it!!

Are we going to learn new things during online classes?

- Of course!! We are in a constant state of building new skills, while nourishing learned ones. You might not realize this but your teachers spend months or years preparing you for a new dance move, we will continue to move forward regardless of the challenges we are currently facing. And you can bet that we will be laying the groundwork for new jumps and turns now so that we have the opportunity to resume in-person classes, we can do them!!

What will happen if I take a break until we are back to in-person classes?

- Understand that your body is your instrument. Without regular practice and care, the technique you have worked SO HARD for will likely regress.

My child is young, can they still benefit from online dance?

- Connecting to friends, teachers and community is wonderful even for the littlest dancers. Even virtual classes provide opportunities to be around others and learn! If your little one gets even one thing out of class, then it's worth it!!