

FUNctional Anatomy for Dancers

Level 1

Meet Your Body!

Meet Your Body!, was written for dance teachers, by dance teachers with the goal of providing fun and educational exercises to explore anatomy.

Meet Your Body! is the first level in the FUNctional Anatomy for Dancers Series. This level introduces joint motion and proper movement vocabulary from the feet to the head. Each consecutive level will go into greater detail with muscle definitions and exploring more detailed movement patterning. Teachers and students will come away from this guide with a greater understanding of efficient alignment and biomechanics.

The Syllabus consists of a Teacher's Guide and Activity Sheet CD. The Teacher's Guide contains 30 Lessons, each designed to take 5-7 minutes of a dance class, and the Activity Sheet answer keys. The Activity Sheet CD contains pdf files for the 30 corresponding student worksheets. This syllabus is appropriate for dancers aged 10 and above.

Sample From: FUNctional Anatomy – **Meet Your Body!**

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Lesson 4 – *Circling the Ankle*

1. Have the students remove their dance shoes as you hand out the Activity Sheets.
2. Discuss the bones that make up the ankle joint.
 - A. Talus – the talus is an irregularly shaped bone that sits between the heel (calcaneus) and the two bones of the lower leg, the tibia and fibula. The talus has a humped shape with the tibia and fibula resting over the talus like a saddle.
 - B. Calcaneus – the calcaneus is commonly referred to as the heel bone.
 - C. Tibia – the tibia is wider of the two bones that make up the lower leg or shin. You can feel the tibia in the front of the shin. It is commonly called the shinbone.
 - D. Fibula – the narrower of the two bones that make up the lower leg or shin. It is the bone on the outside of the lower leg.
 - E. The joint created by the tibia, fibula and talus is what we commonly refer to as the ankle joint. The primary movement of the ankle joint is plantar and dorsiflexion as it is a hinge joint.
 - F. Rotation of the ankle combines the work of the ankle joint with the bones of the midfoot to create the full circle. Proper foot mechanics along with strong yet flexible muscles reduces the potential for injury at this very important joint
3. Have the students label the diagram on their Activity Sheets with the Talus., calcaneus, tibia, and fibula bones.
4. Lead the students through the following movement exercise.
 - A. Have the students sit on the floor wrapping their arms around one thigh with their knee bent and foot in view. The working leg is parallel.
 - B. Have the students flex the working ankle and hold the position for 4 counts.
 - C. Maintaining the flexed ankle position, have the student rotate their feet outward (turning the working foot out more while leaving the leg in the same position). Hold for 4 counts.
 - D. Continue trying to rotate the foot out until the ankle begins to point and hold the position where the foot and ankle are in a pointed, neutral alignment with the leg. Hold for 4 counts.
 - E. Rotate the foot so that it is turning in, trying to maintain as much of the point of the foot and ankle as possible. Hold for 4 counts. Repeat the circle in this direction a total of 4 times.
 - F. Reverse the circle so that you flex in neutral, hold the flexion as you rotate the foot in, point into neutral at the bottom and hold the point as you rotate the foot out.
 - G. Repeat all on the other foot. Remind students to keep knee and tibia motionless while foot is circling.

Lesson 4—*Circling the Ankle*

Movement Exercise

Holding under the thigh with your arms, slowly draw circles with your ankle while keeping the leg motionless. After 8 circles reverse the direction. Repeat all on the second leg.

Anatomy of the Ankle

Draw a line from the name of the bone to the correct bone.

TALUS

CALCANEUS

TIBIA

FIBULA



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