

# HARPER'S BAZAAR® muscle ballet

**S**hould the word "ballet" only conjure up images for you of fine-boned, delicate dancers with legs up to *there* and arms that reach to the stars, think again. Along with the obvious grace, tough discipline and real flexibility that ballet moves deliver, they can also build muscle. Notes former prima ballerina turned exercise trainer Stephanie Herman, who studied with Balanchine and danced with the likes of Baryshnikov and Nureyev, "Without muscle strength, how could a dancer muster the stamina to rehearse for 12 hours a day and still make complicated steps look effortless?"

One reason we don't think of ballerinas as being strong is that they don't have bulky muscles. "Ballet emphasizes lengthening each muscle throughout the movement rather than tight, short contractions," says Toni Beck, who teaches a ballet and stretch class at Dallas' Spa at the Center. "Exercisers still make strength gains, but the muscles look so much better because they're toned, long and lean." And nothing else does so much for a woman's legs.

Since most exercisers are after just that type of muscle tone, aerobics instructors and spa directors around the U.S. are turning to ballet-inspired workouts that even those with two left feet can master. Owing to guest demand, the Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires recently held a week of dance-related workshops. "Technifunk 2000," the latest video from Victoria Johnson, who owns Metro Fitness in Portland, OR, and trains aerobics instructors around the country, combines ballet and jazz with hip-hop funk.

Even in straight aerobics classes, new terminology is evolving. Instead of telling exercisers to

As lovely  
as Swan Lake,  
as tough as  
The Terminator:  
Now, that's  
a workout for  
'92. And  
that's just  
what Bazaar has  
created  
on these pages:  
ballet moves  
matched up with  
the best in  
strength  
and aerobics  
training.  
In 45 minutes,  
a longer,  
leaner you.

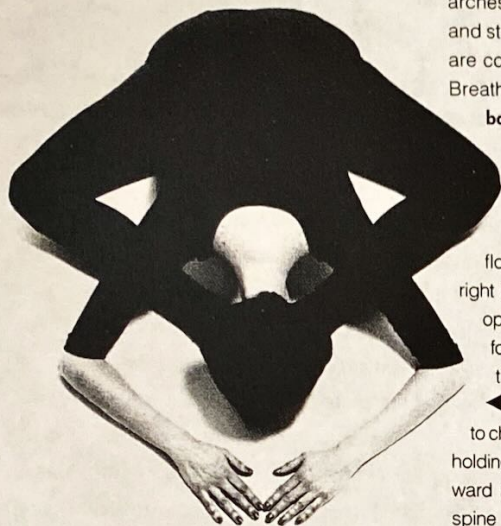
hold their stomachs in and tuck under, instructors are cueing them to "lift from the center," as dance students have been exhorted for years. Music is also being rethought. "For beginner technique, we now have piano accompaniment," says Johnson. "For aerobics, the music is a bit slower than normal and more fluid. It helps exercisers to slow down, jump higher and practice more control"—the essence of both ballet form and injury prevention. At Miami's Doral Saturnia Spa, ballet techniques have been incorporated into warm-up, stretch and water-exercise routines. Nike is even introducing a super lightweight but supportive dance fitness shoe, called the Side One Trilite, this summer.

Though exhilarating to watch, ballet can be intimidating to non-dancers. In today's new exercise versions, however, complicated moves are broken down into individual easy-to-master components. Says Stephanie Herman, who designed the muscle ballet workout, *right*, "Ballet moves take discipline, yet the rewards are there: In about one month, posture improves, muscle tension lessens, particularly in the neck and back, and thighs look thinner."

"Even in women who aren't tall and long-limbed, ballet exercises can help create the illusion of a longer line," notes Anita D'Angela, dance instructor at the Doral Saturnia. "I've seen women add up to two inches to their height after learning the movements." Elizabeth J. Larkam, coordinator of Dancemedicine Rehabilitation at the Center for Sports Medicine, Saint Francis Memorial Hospital in San Francisco, explains that stretching and extending muscles "conditions legs to look longer. Another reason the shape of ballet dancers' legs is different is the technique of turnout. Rotating out from the hips works the inner thigh (CONTINUED ON PAGE 191)

when you do these moves.

**leg lifts** Lie on left side, left arm outstretched, fingers in line with left shoulder. Right shoulder should be in line with right hip. Left and right legs should be bent at 90° angles, heels in line with buttocks and right hand on right hip. Elbow is pointed to ceiling. Controlling abdominal



muscles, open right leg by squeezing buttocks while keeping feet together. Right knee should point to ceiling, then lower. (Keep hand on hip throughout to insure you don't fall into a pelvic tilt.) Repeat 8–16 times, gradually increasing. For more difficulty, add a 1–3 pound weight on thigh.

**bent-knee leg lift** Lying on left side with left arm outstretched and right arm in front for support, keep right knee bent as you lift right leg up toward ceiling. Lower. Feel buttocks against back of thigh as you raise and lower leg 8–16 times.

**total body lengtheners** Lie on left side, legs and arms extended. Lift and extend right leg and right arm an inch or two, parallel with floor. Hold right wrist with left hand and lengthen right leg and arm away from each other for 8 counts; then release. On left side, legs extended, right arm in front for support: Flex right foot as you lift right leg 8 times. On left side, bring right knee to chest, put right hand under the knee. Point knee to ceiling. Slowly straighten leg and try to stretch it to ceiling or to a point that is comfort-

able. Hold for 4 counts. Repeat flexed-foot leg lift 8 times. On left side, bend both knees. Grab right ankle and bring right foot behind you toward buttocks to slowly stretch out quadricep muscle. Repeat flexed-foot leg lift 8 times.

**inner thigh stretch** Lie on back, knees bent and in the air. Grab arches of your feet with both hands and straighten legs as much as you are comfortable, forming a wide V. Breathing deeply, hold for 8 counts.

**back and buttocks strengtheners**

Bring left knee to chest, holding it with left arm. Extend right arm behind your head, keeping your right leg on the floor, foot pointed. Squeezing right buttock, stretch arm and leg in opposition, then hold the position for 1 count. Repeat exercise 4 times with each leg.

◀ **back stretch** Bring both knees to chest and hold for 4 counts. Then, holding onto knees, bring head toward knee. Rock back and forth on spine 8 times. Sit up. Open knees

with soles of feet together and bend torso over knees. Hold for 4 counts.

**foot and leg stretch** Sitting with legs outstretched to either side, point and flex both feet as you try to inch buttocks forward. Repeat 8 times.

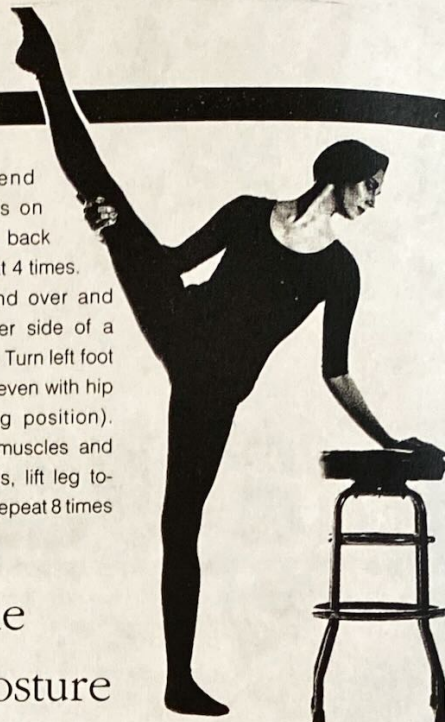
**back of leg stretch** Standing with feet wider than shoulders, bend over and grab each ankle. Bend knees, then straighten as far as comfortable and hold for 2 counts. Repeat 4 times.

**back strengthener** Stand with feet wider than shoulders. Bend over into a flat back position, back parallel with floor. Tighten abdominals, extend arms out in front, parallel with floor. Hold for 4 counts. Bring arms back to knees. Repeat 4 times.

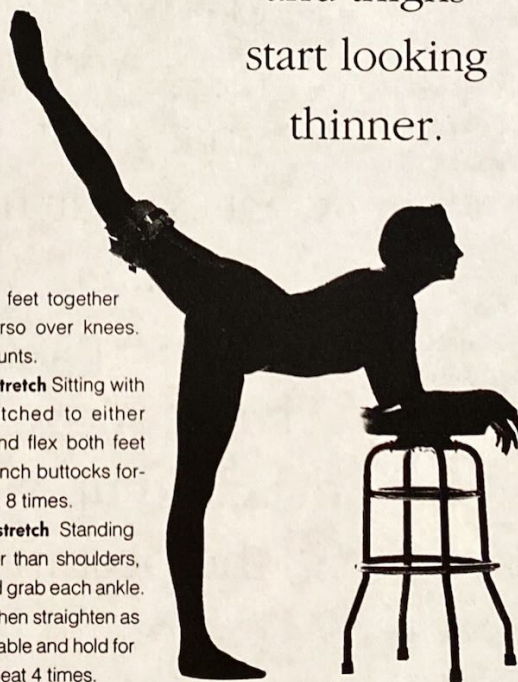
**back loosener** Stand with feet wider

than shoulders, bend over, placing hands on thighs. Slowly round back up, then down. Repeat 4 times.

**bent-over leg lift** Bend over and place hands on either side of a chair seat for support. Turn left foot out and lift leg so it's even with hip (this is your starting position). Squeezing buttocks muscles and controlling abdominals, lift leg toward ceiling. Lower. Repeat 8 times with each leg.



In one month, posture improves, muscle tension lessens and thighs start looking thinner.



▲ **standing leg lift** Turn chair so you can hold onto the top of back. Rotate left foot out and raise leg so that inner thigh is parallel with floor. Lift a few inches toward ceiling, lower. Repeat 8 times, both legs. Advanced exercisers can add a light weight on thigh (1 to 3 pounds).

▲ **wall leg stretch** Standing, support your weight by placing right hand on a wall or high chair. Bring left knee to chest, placing left hand under knee and turning it out to side. Straighten knee to a point that is comfortable. Breathing deeply, hold for 6 counts. Switch sides.

**arm stretch** Stand with feet turned out, shoulder-width apart. Extend arms out to sides, parallel with floor. Breathe out as you stretch arms in opposite directions. Be sure to keep shoulders down. Hold for 4 counts; release. Repeat 8 times.

**arm ripple** With arms extended to sides, bend wrists so fingers point down to the floor, using entire arms to create a swan-like motion. Lift arms up about 6 inches; as you lower arms, bend wrists so fingers point to the ceiling. Keep a slight bend in elbows throughout. Repeat 8 times. (Note: This is a small move.)

**arm windmill** Stand with arms out to sides and slightly rounded. Extend overhead, then cross in front to make complete circles. 8 times.

**neck lengthener** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bring left hand over head to opposite cheek, with right hand on right shoulder. Gently lower neck to left to a point of gentle tension; hold. Repeat 4 times on each side.

**neck and arm stretch** Standing, hands behind neck, tilt head forward, then back, gently pressing into hands. Stretch out through neck and elbows until looking at ceiling. Hold. Repeat 4 times. —Holland Sweet

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 163)

**first-position plié weight transfer**

Stand with heels together, toes out, knees bent and in line over toes as you plié. Keep chest lifted and arms outstretched to sides for balance. Step forward with left foot, lifting right leg about six inches off the ground (right foot should cross in front of left leg), then bring right foot back to starting position and lift left leg.

**plié with changing arms** In second position (feet turned out and apart), and arms in front of you, bend knees and plié down. As you come back up, lift right leg off floor (about 6 to 12 inches) and lift right arm about 30°. Plié down and then repeat on left side, alternating sides.

**forward plié step** In second position, plié down with knees bent, arms at sides. Straighten legs, lifting body and bringing left foot in front. Point toes and swing right arm forward. Return to starting position, then bring right foot forward, point toes and swing left arm forward.

**repeat plié with changing arms.**

**reverse plié step** Begin in second position plié, knees bent, arms at sides. As you straighten right leg, bend left leg and bring left foot behind you toward buttocks, while swinging left arm forward and right arm back. Return to start, then bring right foot back as you straighten left leg, swinging arms.

**repeat plié with changing arms.**

**plié ankle crosses** Standing in first position with arms overhead, cross left foot behind right ankle, then extend left leg out to side and land in second position plié. Arms should be extended out to sides. Bring right foot behind left leg. Repeat sequence.

**plié sweeps** 1. Start in second position plié, arms extended out to side, knees bent. Straighten legs, point left foot and touch the floor in front of you as you swing right arm forward. Return to second position, point right foot and bring it forward. Repeat 32 times. 2. Start in second plié, arms extended out to sides, knees bent. As you straighten legs, point left foot to side. Return to second position, then point right foot to side. Alternate 32 times. 3. Start in second position plié, arms extended

to sides, knees bent. As you straighten legs, point left toe behind you and swing right arm forward. Return to second position plié, point right toe behind, swing left arm forward. Repeat 32 times.

**repeat plié ankle crosses.**

**second position jump** Stand with feet about shoulder-width apart, feet turned out and knees bent. Jump up with both feet and try to point them toward the floor, then land in second position plié. If it's too difficult, just come up on your toes and lower. Repeat 8–16 times.

**AEROBICS** Repeat aerobics section by going back to the demi-pointe prance and running through the sequence again. For more of a challenge, repeat sequence.

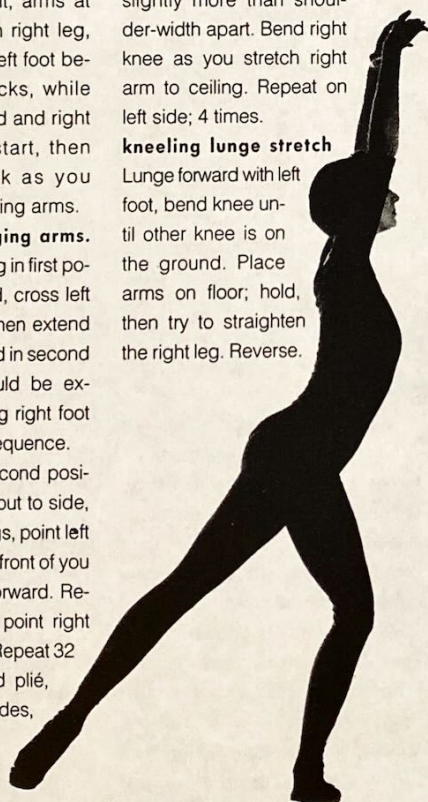
**AEROBIC COOL-DOWN**

**slow demi-pointe walk** Start to gradually bring down your heart rate by doing a demi-pointe walk.

**hip loosener** Standing in second position, wiggle hips left to right 8 times. Then circle hips in a figure-eight pattern 8 times.

**overhead stretch** Stand with feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Bend right knee as you stretch right arm to ceiling. Repeat on left side; 4 times.

**kneeling lunge stretch** Lunge forward with left foot, bend knee until other knee is on the ground. Place arms on floor; hold, then try to straighten the right leg. Reverse.



▲ **standing hamstring stretch** In same lunge position as preceding exercise, try to straighten both

knees to a point of gentle tension. Try to bring your nose toward the front (left) knee. Hold for 4 counts; repeat 4 times with each leg.

**TONING & STRETCHING** This section alternates stretches with muscle toning/strengthening exercises so there's no need to do a cool-down after the workout.

**cat stretch** Get down on hands and knees on floor. Stretch arms and hands out in front of you until head rests on floor. Hold 4 counts. Straighten arms and come up on knees and palms of hands. Breathe out as you round the back, then breathe in as you lift your head up toward ceiling; hold for 2 counts. Repeat 4 times.

**front and back cat crawls** Staying down on hands and knees, straighten your back parallel to the floor. Circle left arm forward, up and back 4 times, then reverse 4 times. Repeat with right arm.

**allah stretch** On hands and knees, back parallel to floor, bend down so forehead touches floor. Using arms, push back up. Repeat 4 times.

**sphinx stretch** Lie on stomach with arms out in front and legs stretched behind you. Bend elbows, then push up so head and chest come off the floor. Hold for 2 counts, lower, repeat 4 times.

**buttocks shaper** Get up on elbows and knees, then lift bent left leg behind you to hip level (knee should be parallel to floor and foot flexed). Control abdominals as you pulse left leg slightly up and down (no more than one inch). Do 16 times, then repeat with right leg.

**back stretch** Lying on back, bring knees to chest and hold for 8 to 16 counts. Then bring knees across body to the left as both arms slide to right. Hold for 8 counts, then repeat on opposite side.

**abdominal isolator** Lying on back, place hands on stomach, take a deep breath and slowly bring hands together, interlocking fingers. Breathe out as you release hands. Repeat 4 times.

**abdominal strengthener** Lying on back, bend knees and place hands behind your head. Tighten abdominals and lift head, neck, shoulders off floor. Hold for 1 count, lower. Re-

Instructors tell exercisers to “lift from the center” as dance students have done.

peat 8–16 times. (Note: If you use the abdominal muscles correctly, your neck and shoulders should not feel strained as you lift them.)

**buttocks toner** Lie on back, arms at your sides, knees bent, feet on floor (knees and feet should be in line with hips). Tighten abdominals, breathe out and squeeze buttocks as you lift them slowly off floor. Hold 1 count, breathe in and lower. Repeat slowly, 8–16 times. (Note: As you lift up, keep knees tight—place a pillow between them until you comfortably learn the technique. You should feel hips lengthening away from your shoulders.)

**repeat back stretch.**

**pulsing buttocks toner** Lie on back, knees bent, feet on floor. Tighten abdominals, breathe out and squeeze buttocks as you lift them off the floor, then pulse buttocks in tiny contractions 8–16 times.

**straight leg stretch** Still lying on floor, straighten right leg and bring left leg up straight over head (or to a point where you can feel a gentle stretch). Keep your knees in a “soft,” relaxed position. Hold for 4 counts. Repeat with right leg.

**quadricep strengthener and lengthener** Lying on back, extend both legs parallel with floor. With hands behind head, point left foot and lift leg about 3–5 inches off floor. Squeeze buttocks as you lower leg. Keep the movement controlled. Repeat 8 times, then turn out leg and lift 8 times. Repeat with right leg. Do the next 3 series all on your left side, then repeat on right side. Beginners start with 8 repetitions, gradually working up to 16. Concentrate on lengthening from toes to fingers

## the leaner-you workout

When Bazaar wanted a 45-minute workout that would hit virtually every muscle group and combine the leg and body-elongating effects of ballet with the stamina-building of aerobics and strength work, we turned to trainer Stephanie Herman. The result: a routine that stresses muscle-lengthening and the latest in injury-preventive thinking. Even the aerobics are different: Herman modified ballet moves.

To maximize results, the workout should be done three times a week. Start each exercise from your "center" by keeping abdominals pulled in and lifted. Remember that the "turnout," ballet's basic pose, should always be initiated from the hip, not the knee, to prevent strain. Only turn out the leg to a point that is comfortable; keep knees over toes. If you find this stance awkward or have had knee problems, simply do the exercise with feet pointing forward. Keep in mind that the form Herman is executing in the photos here is very advanced.

Approach this workout like a new fitness video. Run through exercises slowly the first two or three—or more—times, until you get the hang of them. While the overall routine is designed to take 45 minutes, it may take longer in the beginning. An exercise mat will be useful for the floor moves, as will a chair for the standing leg lifts. Light dumbbells are optional. Herman recommends setting the ballet mood with Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" or a Bach "Brandenburg Concerto." As with any exercise program, it's smart to check first with your doctor.

*Note:* Two basic plié positions are used throughout. First position plié: Stand with heels together, feet turned out and knees in line with toes. Bend knees to a point that is comfortable (buttocks should never drop below knees); then squeeze muscles as you straighten legs, keeping abdominals tight, chest lifted. For second position plié, stand with feet shoulder-width apart, turned out, and do the same bending/straightening of the legs.

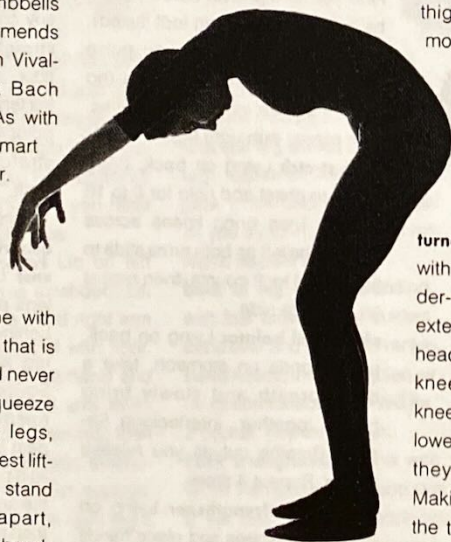
**WARM-UP** Repeat each exercise slowly, 8 times.

**abdominal warm-up** Standing with feet shoulder-width apart, breathe in and place hands on hips. As you exhale, try to isolate abdominal muscles as you move hands toward each other until fingers interlock.

**neck aligner** Stand with back against a wall, feet shoulder-width apart, with head, neck and spine in line. Warm up the neck first by turning head slowly to the left, center and to the right; tilt it up and down. Then place left hand behind head, with elbow in line with the ear and against the wall; the back of the right hand can rest against the lower back. Breathe out, bending neck slowly so that it comes parallel to the floor (or to a point that is comfortable). As you lift your head, use your hand to add gentle tension. (Do 4 times each side.)

**over-the-head stretch** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Stretching from hips, reach to ceiling with your right arm as you bend right leg. Alternate arms and legs.

**low-back "cat" warm-up** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend over, placing hands over knees and keeping back relaxed. Keeping hands on knees, breathe out as you contract the abdominals and round your back. Then breathe in as you arch the back and tilt your head to look to the ceiling.



▲ **shoulder loosener and arm roll** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, upper body bent over, knees

bent. As you breathe out, allow shoulders, head and neck to hang forward slightly. Breathe in and raise your arms up, lifting chest and head until you're looking at the ceiling. As you breathe out, tighten abdominals and drop forward slightly.

**side stretch** Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulders. Extend left arm above your head, placing right hand on right hip. Breathe out as you bend over to right side. Alternate sides during repetitions.

**hip loosener** Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulders, arms out to sides and parallel to floor. Slowly contract abdominals and circle hips around 360°. When hip is circling to the right, extend left arm; when circling left, extend right arm. Keep knees "soft" to prevent strain. Repeat in both directions.

**ankle circles** Resting one arm on a wall or chair for support, slowly circle left ankle from left to right 4 times, then circle it from right to left 4 times; change feet.

**forward plié** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward. Your back should be in a neutral position (not ruler-straight or swayed). Keeping chest up, rib cage supported and abdominals lifted, bend knees and lower your upper body; never drop buttocks below knees. As you come up, squeeze buttocks, keeping front of hips and thighs elongated throughout the movement. Safety checks: Make

sure knees are in line with toes and that they never extend beyond them. As you straighten, do not exaggerate the body into a pelvic tilt, which is the tendency for beginners.

**turnout plié in second position** Stand with feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart, turn feet out, and extend slightly rounded arms over head. Using buttocks muscles, not knee muscles, for power, bend knees, lower your upper body and lower your arms out in front of you till they're parallel with your chest. Making sure knees don't go past the toes, straighten up as you extend arms up over head. For more of a challenge, try to do this exercise in first position, with heels together and feet facing out.

**AEROBICS** Once you've practiced and mastered these aerobic moves, the goal is to progress from exercise to exercise without stopping. Unless otherwise directed, try to do each exercise 32 times—or for about 30–60 seconds. The entire aerobics section is flexible: If there are moves you really like, stick with them longer. The point is to keep your heart rate elevated for 20 minutes, which means repeating this section two or more times.

**demi-pointe**  
**prance** Stand with your feet about 6 inches apart, facing forward, arms at sides. Keeping chest and abdominals lifted and both feet on the ground, come up to the ball of the left foot, then lower to the heel, then alternate feet until you develop a prancing pace. Tighten buttocks muscles as each heel hits floor.

► **demi-pointe in first position** Keeping heels together, turn feet out and roll from left heel through the ball of the foot to toes (you should be up on the bottom half of the toes) and back to the heel, alternating from foot to foot for a fluid pace.

**demi-pointe with backward arm crawl** Prancing in place, feet together and pointing forward, circle arms backward, one at a time, as if doing a backward crawl.

**demi-pointe in first position with arms overhead** Prance in place, alternating feet as in demi-pointe first position. As you prance, extend arms overhead, bending elbows slightly and crossing at wrists. Think of lengthening the upper body and using buttocks muscles.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 164)

