



Dance Recital Practice Tips for at Home

How you can help your child practice at home? *Practice tips are divided by age. Our main priority is your child's well-being. It is important to recognize a child's age development for motor skills, cognitive ability, and focus.*

For ages 6 and under

For students ages 6 and under, get a copy of the music and play it for them, A LOT. Repetition at this age is key. Listening to the music over and over will give them the ability to memorize the song and anticipate the next part of the song. Not only will this help your student manifest musicality, it will also help them memorize their choreography.

- Do not pressure them to show you the dance steps or to practice the dance to a video. That can make them feel pressured instead of enjoying the dance and they can get burned out at an early age.

The important part is taking them to class on a regular basis and having fun at home with the music.

For age 7-10

Students ages 7-10 have the ability to memorize patterns and cues. The best tool for this age is a journal: writing down pattern of the choreography. This is the age where they need to start practicing their choreography at home.

- Please be cautious about over practicing without proper technique. Focus on flexibility and choreography memorization.
- Do not over practice skills or push them to do harder skills without a teacher present. It might seem cool to practice turns, jumps, or tumbling skills that the older students are doing, and it might look as though they are doing it correctly. However, it takes a trained eye to be able to spot improper technique.

Students at this age can learn easily through muscle memory which is both a *positive* and a *negative*.

- *Positive* if they are using proper technique and being carefully monitored by experienced teacher who can constantly correct bad habits before they start.
- *Negative* if they are practicing at home using improper technique over and over; their body will learn improper technique that is very difficult to reverse. Not only can improper technique hold them back in progress, it can also lead to injury. Leave the leaps, turns, and tricks to the teachers.
- For at home practice, students at this age should be practicing with their journals, their videos, their cognitive skills, and their stretching.

For ages 11 and up

Students ages 11 through adults have the ability to self correct, self motivate, and self control their learning pace. They also have the ability to self correct technique after a teacher has told them once or twice.

This also means, their teachers expect more of them. Here are some helpful hints on memorizing challenging choreography.

- Break it down into small sections. Start slow and work that section up to the speed of the music. Then take each small section and link them together to make larger sections. Then link the larger sections to make the dance.
- Practice the dance as a whole without music and back over problem sections. Then try it with music. After you think you've got it, try to learn it by muscle memory.

This means practicing it over and over until you can do it straight through with no mistakes. The magic practice number is seven. If you can do the dance all the way through 7 times in a row without a mistake, Congrats! You have the choreography memorized by muscle memory.

Most importantly, have fun while practicing at home! Learning to dance takes years to master skills and become proficient as a dancer, not months. The best dancer is the one who dances the longest and is the happiest doing it, not the one who's amazing at one recital.