

CRIPPLING FOOT PAIN



The human foot consists of **26 bones and 30 major synovial joints**. Over $\frac{1}{4}$ of all the bones in the body are found in the feet.

The foot is a complex and often misunderstood part of the body. For example in dancer's the feet are pivotal in their role of achieving incredible flexibility with incredible strength. Dr W Hamilton orthopaedic surgeon to the New York Ballet says "***Only an astronaut in our society is a more select individual than a professional ballet dancer***".



To dance en pointe requires incredibly strong calves and the ability of the dancer's muscle, the flexor hallucis longus to stabilise in its extremely shortened position and work from full stretch to jump. (The Dancing Athlete, Rachele Quedsted, In Touch Winter 2012, no 141)

Dancers commonly sustain landing related injuries such as [shin splints](#), [lateral ankle sprains](#), posterior impingement and [hip pain](#).

There are also a high number of stress fractures due to the volume of the hours they train and their slim physique.

Like many athletes including the military but also among runners, rugby players and triathletes, working through pain is almost a badge of honour. It is a combination of education, experience, the harsh reality of injury that eventually the athlete must learn to discern the difference between "good" and "bad" pain.



One of the big problems that predisposes dancers to injury is tight Achilles muscles with weak calves. It is imperative the dancer has strong supple calves which tends to soften the ground reaction forces which can prevent shin splints.

Dancers, like runners, should get any twinges checked and treated immediately by their [sports physio](#) before they turn into full blown injuries.

Posterior impingement is a condition common in kicking sports like football, gymnastics, fast bowlers in cricket. The ligaments at the rear of the foot may thicken or the posterior capsule may get pinched or the dancer not get their weight adequately over the ankle joint. This needs to be assessed carefully and accurately diagnosed.

We work closely with and recommend Mr Heath Taylor at [Dorset Foot and Ankle clinic](#) if you require specialist input.

Midfoot, forefoot and arch pain are also common and **it is important to strengthen the muscles of the foot and the arch.**

If you have any foot or ankle pain, do get it checked out immediately. The bones and joints are small in this area and because they carry the full weight of the body around they are highly prone to damage and injury.

To make an appointment or if you have any questions call **02380 019930** or email us at hello@bodyinmotion.co.uk