

## Dealing with Hip pain (part 2)

Dancers often push their bodies to extraordinary limits, demanding flexibility, strength, and endurance.

However, this intense physical exertion can sometimes lead to hip pain, particularly involving the Tensor Fasciae Latae (TFL) and this is exactly what happened to me just 2 months ago. I went out on the dance floor cold, without warming up on the spur of the moment decision. At some point in my routine, I over extended, pulled my TFL and over the course of the rest of the day the pain in my hip gradually got worse.

Understanding the causes, symptoms, and management of TFL-related hip pain is crucial for dancers aiming to maintain peak performance and prevent long-term injury.

### What is the Tensor Fasciae Latae (TFL)?

The TFL is a small muscle located on the outside of the hip, connecting the iliac crest (part of the pelvis) to the iliotibial (IT) band. It plays a significant role in stabilizing the pelvis and assisting with movements such as hip flexion, abduction, and internal rotation—key actions in many dance styles.



### Why Dancers are Prone to TFL Pain

1. **Overuse:** Repetitive movements, such as high kicks and rapid direction changes, can strain the TFL.
2. **Muscle Imbalances:** Weakness in surrounding muscles like the glutes or core can cause the TFL to overcompensate, leading to overuse and tightness.
3. **Improper Technique:** Poor alignment and technique can place undue stress on the TFL, increasing the risk of injury.

### Symptoms of TFL-Related Hip Pain

- Sharp or aching pain on the outer hip
- Tightness or stiffness in the hip area
- Discomfort during activities like walking, running, or dancing
- Pain when lying on the affected side

### Management and Prevention Strategies

1. **Rest and Recovery:** Allow time for the muscle to heal, especially after intense training sessions and acute injury.

2. **Stretching:** Gentle stretches targeting the TFL and surrounding muscles can relieve tightness.
3. **Strengthening Exercises:** Focus on strengthening the glutes, core, and hip stabilizers to reduce the TFL's workload.
4. **Technique Adjustment:** Work with a dance instructor or physical therapist to correct any technical flaws.
5. **Foam Rolling:** Self-myofascial release techniques can help alleviate muscle tension.

### **When to Seek Professional Help**

If hip pain persists despite self-care measures, it's essential to consult a healthcare professional. A therapist with experience in dance-related injuries can provide a tailored rehabilitation program that includes massage, stretching and exercises.

### **Conclusion**

TFL-related hip pain can be a significant challenge for dancers, but with proper understanding and management, it's possible to overcome and prevent this issue. Prioritizing balanced training, proper technique, and proactive recovery strategies will help dancers maintain their physical health.