

# WHY TRY DANCE FUNDAMENTALS?



- 1 Diversify by adding younger age groups within your program.
- 2 Crossover athletes may enjoy both cheer and dance in your facility.
- 3 Cheerleaders may want to explore Hip Hop or Pom as they feel stalled or have a mental block. Give them a break and encourage their participation in dance.
- 4 Keep your athletes in house if they lose their passion for cheer! Athletes may want to leave cheer and solely explore dance. This allows you to grow your numbers in dance and then have the revenue to hire a dance instructor in the genre(s) that are successful.
- 5 Promotional materials and a fun activity book are included in Dance FUNdamentals for easy marketing in your program and community.

## Notes:

- While implementing the FUNdamental programs please remember the importance of your facilities flooring in regards to dance specific movement and the skills and progressions you chose to implement.
- Pay special attention and use caution when teaching skills with greater impact/force, particularly when teaching on a hard/dense surface.
- We recommend a Marley floor laid over a floating floor for maximum absorption on joints and the stress on the body. Sanded and finished wood floors are also commonly used.
- Teach in an open area that is free from columns or obstructions that a turning or leaping student could run into accidentally
- Spring floor your only option to teach Dance FUNdamentals? It is recommended to avoid turning or performing connected series of high kicks on a spring floor to protect joints from potential injury.

You know your facilities and athletes, so always keep their best interests at the forefront of everything you do and success will follow!

# What are the Benefits of Dance FUNdamentals?

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## CURRICULUM GUIDE

- Outlines the motion/skill of the week.
- Write weekly emails to be sent home to parents and /or printed take home reinforcement of the lessons learned in class.
- Key to Dance FUNdamentals- each class has the same “shell”. The curriculum only varies by the motion or skill you are working on. Everything else remains the same only differing in difficulty or pace as the weeks continue.
- Little to no downtime with younger ages. They are actively engaged continually with this lesson plan.
- Coloring sheet with the Superheroes of All Star doing the motion/skill of the week.
- The coloring piece lists three key things to remember about each motion or step.
- Performance music provided.
- Want to extend the 12 week sessions a little longer? That is easy to do! Slow down the pace of the modules by dividing them in half to extend the sessions if you would like! Be creative with the content and lessen the difficulty required of the footwork and arm combinations if your students are wanting to spend more time with the warm up or choreography. Make the lessons your own and have them fit your program and athletes!

## To successfully implement the Dance FUNdamentals Program our industry experts recommend:

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### MARKETING

#### FLYERS

Create a catchy flyer that has creative wording and parent “buzzwords” to get interest in the FUNdamentals class. Some inspiration is listed below to have you accomplish this. Remember to consider your athlete’s age groups and interests.

Remember these important reminders for verbiage:

#### Verbiage for Marketing Flyers:

- Looking to improve your movement?
- Love watching dancers and want to enhance your moves?
- Want to be on the dance team?
- Thinking of broadening your dance experience?
- Have you thought about dancing in college?
- Have you ever thought of dancing like a pro cheerleader?

#### Example 1 for younger ages:

XYC Cheer Gym introduces their NEW Intro to Pom Dance class. Our curriculum based FUNdamentals Pom Dance Class will introduce basic Pom motions and movement, improve stamina, endurance, muscle coordination, confidence, encourage teamwork, and enhance performance skills. Friends and family are invited to an in-class performance on the last day of class. Dancers will receive a T-shirt with enrollment.

OR

#### Example 2 for older ages:

Have big dreams of dancing center field/center court for your favorite football or basketball team? Come learn some moves from industry professionals. We will work on motions, dance technique and showmanship to help get you ready to wow the crowd. Friends and family are invited to an in-class performance on the last day of class. Dancers will receive a t-shirt with enrollment.

#### Other ideas for FUNdamental flyers may include:

- Include pictures that mirror the genres for parents so they understand what a Pom class would include. Remember to add in the definition for a Pom class on your flyer. Consider using this definition: A Pom class introduces basic Pom motions and movement, improves stamina, and develops endurance, muscle coordination and confidence. The Pom style of dance encourages teamwork as the dancers work together to create visual pictures with the prop and enhances performance skills by moving energetically to an upbeat tempo.

- The Hip Hop flyer should also include fun pictures that reflect the culture and uniqueness of the dance style. Make sure to include photos of male dancers as this genre is very appealing to boys and they will feel encouraged to attend if a male is pictured on the flyer. Consider using this definition for your marketing piece: A Hip Hop class develops athleticism and confidence by teaching a unique and challenging way to use your body. Exploring street style movements develops stamina, strength, musicality and endurance. Confidence and teamwork are emphasized when learning this popular dance style.
- Wanting to appeal to older athletes? Receive authorization from area high school, college and/or professional teams to include their photos on your flyer. Make sure that the teams depicted perform either Pom and/or Hip Hop for the flyer. They will want to explore the style of the team(s) on the flyer in class so make sure their genre is truly Pom or Hip Hop.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### CREATE VIDEO CLIPS TO POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Suggestion: Have your FUNdamentals instructor teach one class to your staff! They will love learning something new and it will be a fun team bonding time. Video parts of the session that will reflect the fun and enjoyment of dancing!

Post fun clips on your team pages to spread the word about the program.

Create Facebook, Instagram and Twitter profiles for the program if you don't have them already. Dance classes need to be announced on main social media pages. Do not create separate profiles. There will be more students interested if they see the class marketed through the main account.

## MARKETING - OPEN HOUSE

### HAVE AN OPEN HOUSE OR BRING A FRIEND NIGHT

Invite your existing athletes to bring a friend and take a fun class. Teach a step or two from FUNdamentals and don't forget to include something from the cheer side to market your sister program. Crossover athletes will enjoy this opportunity to dance and show off their cheer skills.

Follow up with a registration drive and finish with a mini, in-house showcase!

#### Open House Tips:

- Offer free classes, keep them short and fun! Incorporate social dances for Hip Hop and cute sideline dances for Pom.
- Have your top instructors teach/ interact. Parents love to see their children dancing with "The Best" and having fun.
- Offer "on the spot" discounts for enrollment if they register during the open house.
- Raffle door prizes like a free class, clinic or private.
- Consider handing out shirts or swag. If branded, these gifts are free advertisement. Remember to be cost effective while maximizing your marketing!
- Offer a performance option in the community within 6 weeks of the first class to motivate potential clients to enroll. Festivals and other popular events are low commitments for new parents.

## PACKAGE OPTIONS

Provide an option for parents to purchase the poms you use for an additional cost. If you talk it up they WILL purchase it!

## SHOW & SHARE IT

Hype up the class! Get some little ones showing a preview of what they will learn. Keep it short, cute and fun. Use buzzwords like: encouraging, teamwork, fit & strong, fun with friends! Share on social media platforms and demo the event in the community. Host a FREE check-it-out day. Some schools will let you put flyers up, as will some local coffee shops. Host a *Bring a Friend to the Studio Dance* (all have friends interested in dance). Don't forget to create a FUNdamentals filter on Snapchat!

## COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

A welcome email and weekly emails home are additions that impress parents with your professionalism and individualized attention to their child.

## GET THE ENTIRE STUDIO EXCITED ABOUT IT

Don't treat the dance program as a separate entity. The front desk and cheer staff should know about Dance FUNDamentals and initiate discussions with your athletes and parents.

## HAVE ADEQUATE DANCE SPACE

- The preferred space is an open area free from columns or other obstructions to limit movement. The best floor surface is wood or Marley but other non-carpeted surfaces are okay to dance on. Carpet is an option but remember to be mindful of ankle and knee issues while turning. A non-spring floor or dead mat is also optimal.
- Dance FUNDamentals was created knowing that some programs do not have an open area to conduct the class. The spring floor space is an option. Be mindful of the safety tips in the curriculum for you to consider when conducting classes on the spring floor. Refer to the notes at the front of this supplement.
- Remember to keep the Dance FUNDamental space exclusive. Do not conduct other classes in the space while it is being taught. The exclusivity of the space is important for the new customers. The value and respect that is shown for dance will produce results in a year or two in your community! Parents will spread the benefits of this program to others so keep the class space sacred.
- Limit your class size by how many students can adequately move safely in the space.

## APPAREL AND FUN

- Encourage the dancers to wear a shirt you have provided/they have purchased, leggings or shorts and tennis shoes to keep the costs low.
- Consider contests in your Hip Hop classes: Who has the best swag today? Most fun leggings? Encourage the dancers to dress the style! Best sweats, or jacket. Reinforce the influence that style has on Hip Hop and have fun!

## MUSIC

- Know that the music is appropriate in content/lyrics for the age group.
- Music must also be appropriate for the style in tempo and genre.

## HOST AN ALL BOYS CLASS AND/OR MALE INSTRUCTOR(S)

- A huge draw to build numbers is to have an All Male Class for young men to try dance in a fun environment. Many of the industry experts recommend not only offering this class but also having a male instructor teach!
- Consider combining a tumbling class with the All Male Hip Hop class to entice your cheerleaders to cross over to another class.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL TEACHER MUST BE:

- Enthusiastic and great with kids. Remember your teacher does not have to be the most amazing dancer but they have to love kids. With the provided curriculum they can learn what needs to be taught
- Organized. They need to run an efficient class, be timely and knowledgeable about course material
- A great communicator!



# Tips from Successful Dance Program Owners:

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- Offer a foundational ballet class, it will enhance the overall program. Jazz, Hip Hop, and Pom teams are a good start, but successful program owners recommend exploring what the mission and overall goals are of the program for the future. If dance is going to grow successfully, offer basic technique classes to supplement the team training so the athletes are learning technique and not just how to dance one routine.

- Cheer crossovers - it is very difficult to maintain the balance between the two. Crossovers from cheer are great to put into classes and dance training but remember performing in teams for cheer AND dance can prove very challenging at competition.

- Many dance owners also recommend hiring choreography from experienced All Star professionals for your first competition routines. This helps your dancers to perform with a professionally complete product to ensure success at the beginning. Consider purchasing lower price point costumes etc., and up the expense on professional choreography from All Star industry dance professionals for a reasonable price. Finally, remember to read your score sheets! They are a valuable tool to learn and grow from.

- Culture is important and communication is of the utmost importance. The communication between your cheer and dance program should be parallel and equal. Do not treat it like an afterthought. Remain involved if you are the owner. Do not blindly hand the reins to the dance director as your philosophies may not match. Stay connected and do not disassociate yourself from the dance program. As one owner said, "Apple does not let someone else run their phone department while they oversee computers. It remains all one brand."

- Consider paying your dance director and dance coaches a percentage of the growth from their classes. Incentivize your employees by aligning their pay and/or bonus structure with the success of retaining and obtaining athletes.

- When hiring, obtain experienced dance teachers first. If you have a coach in your program who is extremely interested in teaching dance and has great work habits, consider investing in their dance teaching education. They can be trained to teach the lower levels of dance and work alongside the dance director to gain experience. Their hunger to grow and become better will be an asset to your program. Invest in your staff!

- Realize that it takes time to grow dance. Decide on the genre you will add first and have patience. Hip Hop is one of the most successful genres to begin adding dance, along with Pom. Many owners discussed having only 14 students the first year and after a successful competition season, it slowly grew every year. Some began a competition team right away and the success attracted the mini ages. Most owners began with the tiny age and grew to seniors, developing their program from the ground up. Decide if the caliber of your teachers allows you to leap into the competition season. If you are uneasy about going head-to-head with other programs, continue building your recreational team by keeping the costs low and perform at a plethora of community events. Parents can see the long term advantage of having their children stay on one team for a long period of time. Dance provides many long term benefits that are values and leadership enhancing.

- A contract listing the costs and expectations is vital. Consistency in communication is vital.

- Finding great dance instructors who are familiar with All Star can be challenging. High school or college-age dancers are eager to assist and learn from experienced dance directors.

- Biggest mistake that one dance teacher made? BURNOUT! Be intentional in motivating your dancers at least every other week. Be firm, fair and consistent with your critiques on the Marley and lavish your praise of them off the rehearsal floor.

- To obtain parent support echo the statement above about being firm, fair and consistent. This includes pricing! Making exceptions for some parents will produce unease among the group as they will think you are playing favorites. Communicate lesson plans and hold parent meetings, even ones that discuss scoring!

**Finally, what is the biggest piece of advice from many of the owners? Think ahead 3 -5 years about where you want the 'dance' program to be. Just offering dance "to offer dance" can lead to a lack of direction. KNOW YOUR GOALS! Poll the students, parents, coaches and make sure everyone has the same long term vision and that you have instructors with expertise before starting.**



# Top 5 Tips to Have a Successful Dance Program

— Lauren Martin —

- 1 Staff, staff, staff! They will make or break your program. This is the number one area to never compromise.
- 2 Implement promotional ideas such as: Advertising, social media, bring-a-friend days, discount for referrals, free master classes. Anything to get people in the door to try a class and get them hooked.
- 3 Have a firm mission statement that you adhere to. People will know what you are about, can trust and respect you. For example, put the needs of the team before the individual.
- 4 Network. There are so many resources within the USASF and it's members to help you be successful. Use those tools.
- 5 Have adequate flooring and equipment for safety to prevent injuries.

## Bonus Tip:

Offer “intro to dance” classes that can bring in dancers at the beginning level to expose them to different styles. Judge your clientele to see what genres you should start with for a prep team and keep building from there. My rec classes are a great way to get people in the door at a low cost and low commitment and that feeds into our team.

For marketing, word of mouth and social media are my biggest tools. I offer different incentives for my families to recruit. For example, they can get \$10 a month off of their tuition for every person they refer for as long as that person is registered that season. Essentially, that gives them a reason to recruit other than the fact that they love their studio. It's like a fundraiser. If they get 3 kids, that might cost me \$30 a month but I'm bringing in an extra \$300 that I wouldn't have had. That's just one example. We do bring-a-friend weeks, free trial weeks. I use the very easy app Fiverr to create great flyers for social media. Then we have fun incentives for the dancers in class for those who shared or tagged people. Ask to perform at high school basketball games, children's festivals, etc.”

— Vanessa Graziano —

- 1 Staff- it is absolutely worth the time and effort to vet a strong staff. They will make or break a program.
- 2 Mission statement and vision- everything will come from, and center around, these two things. Without them, a studio will struggle to thrive. There needs to be a strong value system to revolve around and for clients to get behind.
- 3 Equipment- a studio needs proper equipment to keep athletes safe, promote proper learning, and legitimize what they do in a competitive market.
- 4 Enhancements - the extra things that make you stand out in a competitive and/or saturated market: team bonding activities, community service events, whole-athlete focus and curriculum, etc.
- 5 Retention- in my opinion, this is the secret sauce. Research proves that it is less expensive (both time and money) to retain a current client than to obtain a new one. Putting dedicated focus on both retaining clients (through #1-4 above, among other things) and obtaining new ones creates impressive and noticeable growth and subsequent success in a shorter period of time.

— Katie Perdue —



- 1 Set expectations day one and follow thru. BE CONSISTENT.
- 2 You can never over-communicate with dancers and parents.
- 3 Mold well-rounded dancers: experiment with all styles, workouts, and stretching exercises.
- 4 Have a show/show-off at least twice a year. Show the parents the joy they are paying for!
- 5 Celebrate student successes: Find times to make them feel extra loved, special, and spoiled.

## Wanda Weir



- 1 The best teacher doesn't have to be the best dancer. Look for someone who is organized, professional and responsible.
- 2 When starting a dance program it's important to find a teacher who LOVES kids and has experience in classroom management. Teachers with degrees in elementary education can be the best fit for a recreational dance program.
- 3 It's always better to OVER communicate! A parent will never complain that you gave them too much information. Make sure parents are informed of schedules, changes and class news in a regular and timely manner.
- 4 Build a dance COMMUNITY! Offer master classes, camps and special performance opportunities.
- 5 Have a separate dance space, if possible. Proper flooring, mirrors and having dance apparel for sale adds legitimacy to your program. Dancers should feel like they are coming to take dance class and not coming to cheer class that has dance!

## Kathy McCormick



- 1 Make time for the basics. Stretching, strength and technique foundations keep your dancers /athletes healthy.
- 2 Practice makes PROGRESS! Strive for progress, not perfection. Acknowledge even the "baby steps" to keep dancers engaged. Pushing for perfection causes stress and burnout!
- 3 Team work makes the dream work! Whether it's collaboration and support with your staff or students, working together for a common goal unites your program. Set goals and achieve them together!
- 4 Positivity, positivity, positivity! Keep critiques positive and constructive. Focus on what makes you and your kids happy, and learn to deliver corrections with love!
- 5 Have fun!! Practices should be fun! You can work hard and still have a great time! Don't be afraid to laugh! A little levity goes a long way in a hard practice!

## Steven Thornton



- 1 Positive coaching is a must
- 2 Family Atmosphere is vital
- 3 Ensure progress of each dancer
- 4 Have Engaging Instructors
- 5 Communication is imperative

