

# 7 QUICK BALLET POSTURE FIXES CHECKLIST\* THAT WILL INSTANTLY IMPROVE YOUR BALLET TECHNIQUE (BALLET BARRE EDITION)

\* in depth, detailed explanation of each step on the page 2

- ☐ 1. ENGAGE YOUR CORE: SUCK YOUR BELLY IN AND UP
- ☐ 2. PUSH YOUR HIPS FORWARD (SCOOP MOTION)
- ☐ 3. PRESS YOUR HEELS INTO THE GROUND
- ☐ 4. PUSH THE BALLS OF YOUR FEET TO THE GROUND
- ☐ 5. ROTATE YOUR SHOULDERS BACK
- ☐ 6. ENGAGE YOUR WING MUSCLES
- ☐ 7. PULL UP YOUR BACK MUSCLES

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## KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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- **Ballet is logical and precise** — much like math. You can break down any movement and scientifically understand how it was performed.
- **Muscles weigh**, which can be either an advantage or a hindrance. When engaged properly, they provide strength and control; when neglected, they become a ballast that disrupts your dancing. Use them all!
- **Every body is different**. Variations in bone structure and muscles mean that some movements are easier for some dancers than others.
- **The checklist above is universal and applies to every dancer**.
- **Strength over flexibility**. Ballet is primarily about strength, not just flexibility.
- **Aunified body is an outcome**. Applying all the points from this checklist will connect all parts of your body into one strong, unified system.
- **Immediate impact**. Each point, when executed correctly, will initially reduce flexibility and improve stability, allowing for more controlled movements.
- For more details, visit our blog.



## DETAILED EXPLANATION

### 1. ENGAGE YOUR CORE: SUCK YOUR BELLY IN AND UP

**Explanation:** This is the critical first step in establishing a solid foundation. You've likely heard the cue to "suck in your belly" before, but it's common for dancers to lose this engagement as they move. The reason is that simply pulling in your belly without proper support leaves your muscles nothing to hold onto. By sucking your belly IN and UP, you create an anchor for your abdominals under your rib cage, ensuring they stay engaged throughout the entire exercise.

**What it does:** Pulling the core muscles UP moves your abdominals under your rib bones, creating a "lock" under something stable—your ribs. This allows you to keep your core muscles engaged for extended periods, even during challenging movements.

**How to check if it's working:** Before beginning any exercise, try to twist your upper body left and right. After sucking your core muscles IN and UP, you should feel a noticeable reduction in your ability to twist. This restriction indicates that your core is properly engaged and stabilized, preventing unnecessary movement.

### 2. PUSH YOUR HIPS FORWARD (SCOOP MOTION)

**Explanation:** This second step is key to establishing a strong and stable base. Pushing your hips forward alone won't be as effective if your core isn't engaged first. However, when combined with pulling your belly IN and UP, this motion helps connect your upper body to your lower body. Think of your hips as a "scoop" that should push forward, activating your glutes and lower abdominals. This motion is crucial for grounding yourself in preparation for more advanced movements.

**What it does:** This step activates your glutes, hamstrings, and lower abdominals. Along with the upper abdominals that are locked under your ribs, this creates a continuous line of engagement from your core to your legs, forming one strong, connected muscle.

**How to check if it's working:** When done correctly, scooping your hips forward will immediately activate your lower abdominal muscles, which you should feel and possibly even see (especially if you wear our leotard). The base you've created will feel firm, allowing you to remain stable and balanced.



### 3. PRESS YOUR HEELS INTO THE GROUND

**Explanation:** Pressing your heels into the ground is essential to create a solid connection between your body and the floor. Imagine your feet as the foundation of a building and your legs as the supporting columns. No matter how strong your core is, without a firm connection to the floor, your movements will lack stability. This step helps you avoid over-reliance on the barre, which often happens when dancers aren't properly grounded.

**What it does:** By pressing your heels down, you engage the muscles in your legs—especially your hamstrings and calves—and establish a firm connection to the floor. When combined with the previous two steps, your body is now unified from the floor to the core, ready for any movement.

**How to check if it's working:** As soon as you press your heels down, you should feel your leg muscles, particularly your thighs, engaging in a lean, ballet-style way (rather than a bulky, gym-style way). This alignment helps you stay grounded without overburdening your knees or relying on external support.

### 4. PUSH THE BALLS OF YOUR FEET TO THE GROUND

**Explanation:** Dancers often make the mistake of leaning too far back onto their heels, which can lead to instability and difficulty in performing certain movements (like promenades). By pressing the balls of your feet to the ground, you distribute your weight evenly across your entire foot, rather than just on the heels. This is especially important for preparing to move into demi-pointe or full pointe positions, which require weight on the balls of the feet.

**What it does:** Pressing the balls of your feet into the ground shifts your weight from the heels to the whole foot. This even distribution is necessary for many ballet movements, particularly those requiring pointe or demi-pointe. It also prevents your toes from lifting.

**How to check if it's working:** To test this, try lifting your toes while pressing the balls of your feet down. If it's difficult to lift your toes, you're pressing correctly. If you can lift them easily, you need to push the balls of your feet more firmly into the ground.



## 5. ROTATE YOUR SHOULDERS BACK

**Explanation:** This is a simple but essential movement to prevent slouching and to maintain the iconic, elegant ballet posture. By rotating your shoulders back, you open up your chest and align your upper spine, creating the upright posture that is necessary for all ballet movements. This small adjustment helps prevent the common tendency to hunch forward, which can throw off your alignment and make it harder to balance.

**What it does:** This step pushes your chest slightly forward and straightens the upper part of your spine, aligning your neck with your spine. It also helps lift your arms into the correct position and allows for better arm and head coordination in movements.

**How to check if it's working:** This movement involves less muscle engagement and more posture correction, so you can mainly assess it visually. Your shoulders should now be positioned slightly behind your body, forming a clean line with your spine.

## 6. ENGAGE YOUR WING MUSCLES

**Explanation:** This is perhaps one of the most challenging steps to master, but it comes with numerous benefits. The wing muscles (latissimus dorsi) are often underutilized in dancers, especially those who haven't yet built the mind-muscle connection needed to activate them. Engaging these muscles connects your upper body with your core and arms, helping you maintain strength and stability in your upper body throughout class. It also prevents your neck from leaning forward, a common issue in posture.

**What it does:** Engaging your wing muscles locks your shoulders in the correct position, supports your upper body's alignment with your core, and prevents neck strain. Additionally, it ensures your arms stay strong and controlled during movements, rather than floppy or disengaged.

**How to check if it's working:** When you properly engage your wing muscles, you'll notice two immediate changes: you won't be able to look down easily (helping to avoid the common habit of "looking at your feet"), and your arms will feel naturally lifted and strong, with a slight separation between your elbows and ribs.



## 7. PULL UP YOUR BACK MUSCLES

**Explanation:** This final step adds the light, lifted quality that makes ballet so distinct. While the previous steps ground and stabilize your body, pulling up your inner-back muscles lifts your body from the ground, giving you the appearance of weightlessness. Your back muscles are among the largest in your body, and engaging them not only helps you appear taller and lighter, but also takes some of the weight off your joints, improving your flexibility and ease of movement.

**What it does:** Pulling up your back muscles relieves pressure from your joints by creating space within them, allowing for greater flexibility and improved extension. Since your back muscles are so large, properly engaging them can dramatically reduce the effort your body has to exert to move efficiently.

**How to check if it's working:** While this step doesn't produce as obvious a visual effect as the others, you should feel your entire body lifting and elongating. You may notice a slight slimming effect, as your body appears leaner and more upright.