

# Dance/USA

## Task Force on Dancer Health

### **Does Your Dance Bag Cover Your Needs?**

While dancers performing in a company may have access to a backstage first aid kit for injuries and needs which occur during performances and on tour, dancers must also be responsible for their individual medical needs on a day to day basis. Additionally, companies with smaller budgets might not provide adequate medical supplies, or staff to administer them, when in theatres or on tour. Each dancer has many things they carry in their dance bag on a daily basis. They should be aware of their own medical needs, and be responsible for including in their personal dance bag the necessary medical supplies that pertain to them. This paper provides suggestions on a variety of things dancers may find helpful to have in their dance bag to stay healthy and performing at the top of their abilities during classes, rehearsals, and performances.

While levels of organization (or lack of organization) will vary from dancer to dancer, we recommend creating multiple zip top bags of appropriate sizes, which can be put into your bag or removed based on your needs for the day. Recommendations are organized by category, which could be placed within a bag together.

#### **PERSONAL MEDICAL HISTORY SHEET**

Be sure you are able to provide information about your medical history, should the need arise. Keeping a card or sheet that includes your past medical history, previous surgeries, previous injuries, and any current medications is a great way to have this information handy. It may be a good idea to keep this page in a page protector to prevent wayward marks or damage. Additionally, if you are going to see a physician, be sure to bring any imaging discs or reports you may have which pertain to your injury.

#### **FIRST AID, WOUND CARE, & TAPE BAG**

This bag should contain supplies to treat any small cuts, blisters, or other skin problems which may occur during your day. Be sure to bring an extra roll of any tape you may use during preparation for dance. This could include stretch tape, self-adherent tape, pre-wrap, duct tape, or adhesive cloth tape used for both treatment and prevention of blisters.

This bag could include:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Skin Blister Patches
- Antibiotic ointment (Neosporin)
- Bandages of varying sizes
- Cover Roll
- Cotton balls
- Cotton swabs (Q-Tips)
- Foam or Felt padding
- Gauze pads
- Lamb's wool
- Moleskin
- Rubbing (Isopropyl) alcohol

## MEDICATION BAG

This bag should contain medications you may need to treat any problems which may occur.

Some examples could include:

- Antacid (Tums)
- Antihistamine (Benadryl)
- Cough drops
- Indigestion, Nausea, or Diarrhea medication (Pepto Bismol, Immodium)
- Medicated back plasters
- Pain Reliever/Anti-Inflammatory (Ibuprofen, Naproxen)
- Pain Reliever/Antipyretic (Tylenol)
- Topical analgesics or liniments (Icy Hot, Biofreeze)

Additionally, keeping an extra dose of any prescription medication you may be taking is recommended. ***This is especially true if you have an EpiPen or Inhaler.*** You should also be sure to check the expiration dates of any medications you carry in your dance bag to make sure they are most effective. If you have a medical condition which requires additional supplies, such as diabetes, it may be a good idea to keep an extra glucometer in your bag, even if you don't normally check your blood sugar during the day.

## OUTDOOR BAG

This bag could be carried in the event you will be taking class, rehearsing, or performing in an outdoor space. It is important to consider any environmental challenges which may come up during the day.

This bag could include:

- Additional layer of clothing
- Heat/space blanket
- Insect Repellent

- Sunscreen
- Towel

### **SELF-CARE TOOL BAG**

This bag contains all the tools necessary for care of nails, splinters, or other problems which may arise.

This could include:

- Nail clippers
- Nail file
- Safety pin or needle
- Scissor
- Splinter kit (disposable)
- Thermometer
- Tweezers

### **MYOFASCIAL AND THERAPY TOOLS**

This bag could include:

- Foam roller
- Golf ball
- Half Domes for foot release
- Individual Instrumented Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization or other massage tool
- Lacrosse ball
- Overball
- Psoas release ball
- Stick roller
- Tennis ball

### **SNACK AND HYDRATION BAG**

In addition to bringing enough food and drink for a normal day, it is recommended to carry a few extra non-perishable snacks and drinks, should the need arise. This could include granola bars, fruit snacks, and an extra sports drink, either bottled or individual powder.

### **HOT/COLD PACK**

A gel first aid pack, which can be placed in either the freezer or in the microwave, is a versatile addition to your bag. Be sure to remember cold packs should be used on new injuries to help with pain control and reduce inflammation. Use care if you are using a chemical/instant cold

pack, as these have the potential to cause frostbite due to their rapid cooling. Heat should not be used within the first 48 hours following injuries to avoid excessive swelling and inflammation, but would be recommended as part of a warm-up for any muscle aches.

## **ANYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT NEED**

The most important things to have in your bag are things YOU may need. Dancers who get a menstrual period should carry extra feminine hygiene products. A dancer who is diabetic may want to consider carrying a glucometer, even if they do not normally check their glucose levels during the day. There is no way the lists provided in this document can be all-inclusive. The goal is to get dancers thinking about things they may need on a day to day basis. Take a minute to think about what wasn't in this document, but what YOU may need.

*Disclaimer: The information on suggested healthcare items for dance bags contained in this paper is intended to help guide and inform the dancer. It is not meant to take the place of the advice of a medical professional. This information is provided by Dance/USA Task Force on Dancer Health. (Times New Roman 12)*

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