



Information Regarding Wearing Masks While Dancing Inside the Classroom

At this time, all dancers are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to wear a mask in the classroom while participating in class. **we understand however, there are individuals who cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons such as asthma, cystic fibrosis, or any other preexisting respiratory condition.*

Even with UDA following all COVID rules and guidelines set forth by Utah's local and state government, MTJGD Safer Studio Guidelines and executing the highest standard of care by putting plans and systems in place to minimize COVID risk we feel it is critically important to take additional responsibility for our own health and safety (as well as others) **where we can.**

The information below is to help educate parents on dancers wearing masks while dancing inside the classroom. In addition to the information provided in this document, we encourage parents and dancers to do their own research on the topic to ensure the best decision is made for their dancer.

Is it Safe to Dance in a Mask?

At the bottom of this email we have provided links to several articles about this topic for those who would like to learn more, but just like anything else, you can find negative and positive opinions about dancing or exercising in a mask. We feel it is important to note however that many dance studios and/or foundations of education (ex. the Dance Department at the University of Utah) are requiring their dancers to wear masks upon returning to school/dance this fall.

In addition to helping stop the spread of COVID-19, below are other positive findings about wearing a mask while exercising:

- Strengthens Respiratory muscles and increases stamina
- Causes increased fatigue of respiratory muscles which in turn will help to:
 - Increase strength of respiratory muscles
 - Help increase lung capacity
 - Has also been shown to help increase efficiency of oxygen exchange over time

How to Adapt to Dancing in a Mask

- Just like most things, dancing in a mask will require a little bit of preparation and training before one can feel completely comfortable exerting themselves in a mask, beyond a state of rest.
- Where a mask throughout the day while slowly increasing your physical activity; this can start with going up and down the stairs, doing physical chores at home, or by adding any basic activity that elevates your heart rate.
- From here, consider building to the next level by adding light exercise to your daily activity while wearing a mask. This might include going for a brisk walk outside in the middle of the day, practicing yoga or stretching at home.
- From here one can start to add short sprints of cardio activity that increase over time as it becomes easier to perform in a mask.

How to Dance in a Face Mask

- You must be adaptable. The first day of class with a mask will be a challenge, just like the first day in a new pair of pointe shoes, turning shoes, tap shoes or trying to dance in bare feet!
Remember all things that begin with discomfort gets easier with time.
- When you start to sweat and breathe heavily due to a warm studio or your own exertion, the mask fabric can cling to your face, making your breathing feel more labored. To relieve this sweaty situation, bring a spare mask (or several) that you can swap in between classes.
- Initially, a mask will make it harder to breathe during exercise therefore, dancers should self-monitor possible symptoms of lightheadedness, dizziness, and shortness of breath and stop dancing if they feel faint or temporarily remove their mask.

PARENTS PLEASE NOTE:

- *UDA teachers have been instructed to watch for these symptoms and check often with those dancers wearing a mask to see how they are feeling.*
- *If your child decides to wear a mask in class, please initially check in with your dancer each day after their dance class(es) to ensure they are having a positive experience wearing a mask while dancing.*

How to Properly Wear a Mask

- Masks should cover a dancer's face from the bridge of their nose to under their chin.
- It should be secure enough to stay in place without the dancer having to adjust it.
- Dancers should wear a mask that does not itch or irritate their skin.
- Dancers should wear a mask they are comfortable talking in.
- If a dancer's mask becomes saturated with moisture from breathing or sweat, they are encouraged to change into a dry mask to avoid wearing a mask that clings to their face.
- Dancers are encouraged to pack several face masks in their dance bag if they plan on wearing a mask while dancing
- All masks worn in dance class should be cleaned with hot water and soap and allowed to fully dry.
- Ironing masks on the highest setting can help disinfect masks after they have been washed and dried.
- Commercial reusable mask options are also available and often the best to use while exercising because they are thin and some say, "more breathable".

REFERENCES FOR DANCERS AND PARENTS THAT WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DANCING IN A MASK

<https://www.thedancedocs.com/episodes/dancing-in-a-mask>

<https://www.pointemagazine.com/how-to-dance-in-a-face-mask-2646374340.html>

https://www.apollaperformance.com/blogs/news/safely-incorporating-masks-into-dance-class?_pos=2&_sid=c891aced6&_ss=r

https://dance-usa.s3.amazonaws.com/page_uploads/COVID%20FAQ%20-%20MAY%202020.pdf