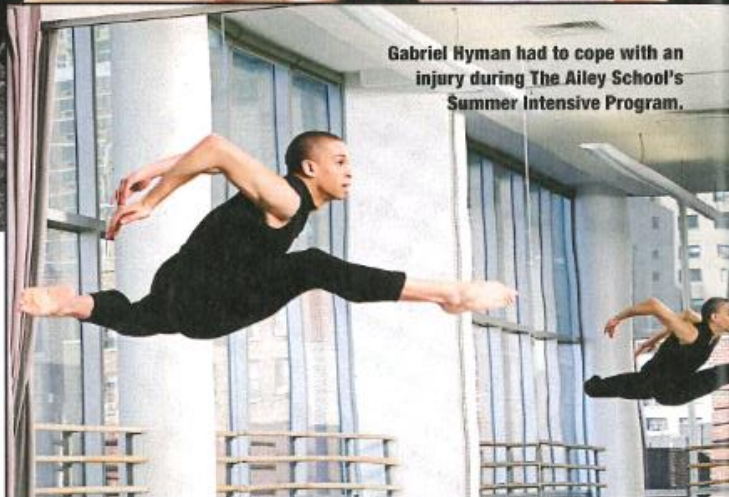




Class at The PULSE on Tour



Gabriel Hyman had to cope with an injury during The Ailey School's Summer Intensive Program.

“OUCH”

DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN

“GOODBYE”

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET INJURED AT YOUR SUMMER INTENSIVE

BY KRISTYNN BRADY

With only two weeks left in The Ailey School's Summer Intensive Program, Gabriel Hyman collided with his partner during a rehearsal for the final performance and suffered a calf-muscle tear. “I was told that recovery would take at least two weeks,” says Hyman, who’s currently an Ailey II apprentice and a junior in the Ailey/Fordham University BFA program. “I’d been cast in two pieces and I could hardly go on relevé—it was so disappointing.” With the help of a physical therapist, he figured out how to make it through some of his choreography and modify his movement in class. “But sometimes I could only observe.”

Getting injured during your summer intensive probably seems like the worst-case scenario. You worked hard to get accepted, and you want to milk as much as you can from the experience—not sit on the sidelines. But your summer doesn’t have to end just because you got hurt. In fact, learning how to seek help for an injury, monitor your



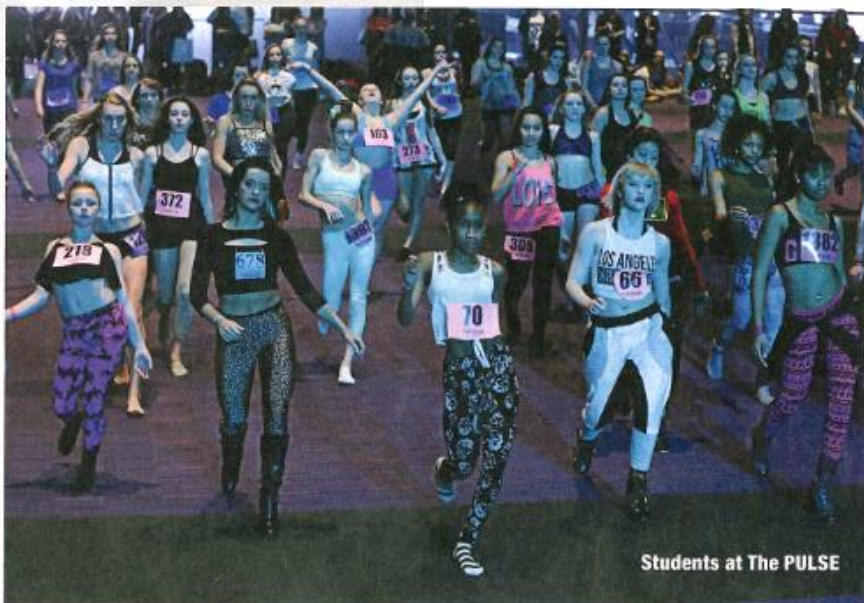
Horton class at The Alley School

THESE PROGRAMS ARE CALLED *INTENSIVES* FOR A REASON: YOU MAY BE TRANSITIONING FROM FOUR HOURS OF DANCING A DAY TO 10 HOURS OF CLASSES, WORKSHOPS AND REHEARSALS DAILY DURING THE SUMMER.

own recovery and grow from the experience can be just as beneficial to your career as dancing full-out from June through August. Here's your guide to dealing with your injury, so you can still have an amazing summer of dance.

THE SHOCK

These programs are called *intensives* for a reason: You may be transitioning from four hours of dancing each day during the school year to 10 hours of classes, workshops and rehearsals daily during the summer. You won't be the only one who's sore, tired or suddenly aware of areas that need strengthening. "Even before placement classes at Boston Ballet's summer intensive, I talk to the dancers about symptoms of strain and inflammation and teach them how to treat routine soreness," says Susan Kinney, who has been head of the school's physical therapy clinic for the past seven years.



Students at The PULSE

It can be tempting to power through minor injuries at a summer intensive. But if you're experiencing pain that restricts your movement, it's time to speak up. "Discomfort and pain have a purpose—they tell you what you're doing wrong or what you're overworking," Kinney says. If you ignore significant pain, you might end up with an injury that will last well beyond the summer.

movement before you tell me you're hurt, the explanation could end up sounding like an excuse." During your preclass discussion, keep things short and sweet. "Kids tend to be scared to tell the teacher or feel like they need to have a big, long explanation, but just be honest and concise," Lipton says. "Say something like, 'I pulled my inner thigh, and I'm going to do my best to work around it in class today.'"



Boston Ballet School students

THE TALK

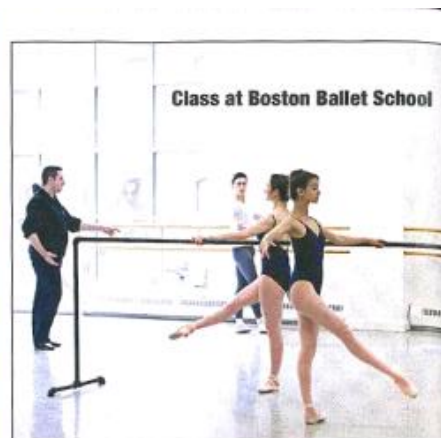
If you do get injured, it's important to arrive at the studio 15 or 20 minutes early to discuss the problem with your teacher. "During or after class is the wrong time to talk about an injury," says Brooke Lipton, who teaches contemporary dance for The PULSE on Tour. "If I see you modifying

THE ALTERNATIVES

How can you determine what movements are safe to do while injured? Your recovery should be a collaboration with your teachers and parents, says Jonathan Sharp, who's on faculty at Joffrey West's summer intensive in L.A. and oversees the summer dance program at Idyllwild Arts. "If you describe



Brooke Lipton teaching at The PULSE



Class at Boston Ballet School

PREVENT INJURIES WITH PROPER PREP

GEARING UP FOR A SUMMER PROGRAM? HERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MAKE INJURIES LESS LIKELY.

KEEP MOVING

Don't take time away from the studio between your June recital and your August intensive. Boston Ballet School physical therapist Susan Kinney recommends maintaining your normal class routine—even adding up to two classes a week. Take advantage of the downtime you have now that school's out and start cross-training. "Do cardio—whether that's swimming or using the elliptical or stationary bike—as well as yoga, Pilates, or Gyrotonics," she says. "It only takes four to six weeks to really improve your stamina, strength and flexibility."

PACK SMART

Jonathan Sharp, who teaches at Joffrey West's summer intensive in L.A. and runs the Idyllwild Arts summer program, says not to underestimate the power of a good night's sleep. "Pack your pillow and comforter from home, so your bedtime routine is familiar," he says. "And bring a good water bottle—you should drink close to an entire bottle after every class. You're working your muscles to the extreme, and without hydration they'll cramp." Other must-haves: an ice pack, a microwavable heat pack, kinesio tape and a strap for stretching, Kinney says.

EASE IN

Once you arrive at your summer intensive, take things slow. "Don't kill yourself during placement class," Kinney stresses. "It's natural to want to place at a top level, but you can work hard without blowing it out on Day One. That's when a lot of young dancers start brewing an injury that affects them later in the summer." —K.B.

the pain and ask what you should do, your teachers will watch you in class and do their best to help," Sharp says. If your program has physical therapists on staff, take advantage of their expertise, too—they likely treat professional dancers year-round and will know how to advise you. For something like shin splints, says Shaw

Bronner, director of physical therapy at The Ailey School, the solution might be as simple as avoiding jumps. Or, if a student has anterior hip pain, Bronner would have her keep leg lifts below 45 degrees.

If, after working with your teacher and physical therapist, it seems like the best

thing for you to do is to observe class, you may still be able to learn a great deal, thanks to the difference in perspective. "Observing class was a great opportunity for me to see the lines I'd been trying to achieve," Hyman says. "It helped me realize exactly how I should be positioning my body." Challenge yourself to be an active watcher, and develop your own "eye of the teacher," Sharp says. "Identify what the teacher is talking about in a correction. Can you see it?" Lipton urges students to train their choreographic memories by learning combinations without moving their bodies. "Your eyes are just as beneficial as your arms and legs," she says.

THE BOTTOM LINE

An injury that keeps you out of the studio for a substantial length of time, like a fracture or torn ligament, might mean it's time to go home. "Everyone hurts for a student who has to leave early," Kinney says. "But if an injury is severe enough that you can't modify movement at all, it really is best for you to go home and take care of it." She adds that, in her experience, the majority of injuries that send students home develop from a pre-existing condition. "It's just one more reason to be honest and up front with your teachers and PT at the beginning of the intensive."

Don't despair, though: Summer-ending injuries are relatively rare. Bronner has even seen seriously injured Ailey School students who were still able to work with intensive choreographers. "Many times we find some way for them to be a part of the final performance," she says. "Everyone wants the dancers to come away with a positive experience." DS

• Kristyn Brady is a Brooklyn-based writer and editor with a BA in dance from Muhlenberg College.