

Beat the Cheat: Combat Improper Balance with the Yoga Moves

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We have all done it. You prepare to execute a series of flawless turns, only to fall flat to the floor. Or perhaps you're struggling to nail the balance at the end of a combination at the barre. You try again and again, but finding your center seems impossible—so you let yourself lean back or lower your standing heel *just a little bit, just this once*. While it seems like a good idea in the moment, that move has consequences that can range from inefficient movement patterns to serious injury. Fortunately, we can beat both the cheat and its potential side effects.



Dance Spirit recruited Pilin Anice, a dancer, dance teacher, and fitness instructor at Ailey Extension for some tips to improve your next balancing act. With a focus on the lower body, these yoga moves will help you strengthen your core and increase stability and flexibility in your legs and feet.



The Cheat: Falling Off Demi-Pointe

Boat Pose

1. Start seated on the ground with your legs extended in front of you.
2. Press your hands on the ground slightly behind your hips and point your fingers towards your feet. Bend your elbows and allow your body to lean into your hands.
3. Bend your knees and lift your feet until your shins are parallel to the ground. Maintain the angle of your torso and lift your arms alongside your legs.
4. Hold the pose for up to 1 minute.

Tip: Keep your hands on the floor to assist with the lengthening of the spine.



Fire Log Pose

1. Start seated upright on the floor, with your knees bent and feet on the floor.
2. Stack your shins on top of each other, with the right ankle on top of the left knee. Keep your feet flexed.
3. Hold the pose for up to 1 minute on each side.

Tip: If your hips are tight, sit on a yoga block or rolled blanket.



Dancer's Pose

1. Start standing with your feet parallel and your palms pressed into your thighs.
2. Bend your right knee and bring your right heel to your seat. Keeping the right knee in towards the midline, hold the outside of your foot with your right hand.

Tip: Bring your free hand to the wall to assist with balance.



Foot Massage

1. Start seated on the ground, with the soles of your feet touching and your knees and hips open. Interlace your fingers through your toes.
2. Gently open and close your fingers.
3. Press your hand forward and backward to stretch the toes and massage the arch.
4. Spend about a minute with each foot.

Tip: Sit on a yoga block or chair if your hips are particularly tight.



Legs Up the Wall

1. Sit with your right side up against the wall, with your knees bent and feet on the floor.
2. Lie on your back and swing your legs up so that the backs of your legs connect to the wall.
3. Stay in this position for up to 20 minutes.

Tip: If you have tight hamstrings, slide hips away from the wall or bend your knees slightly.